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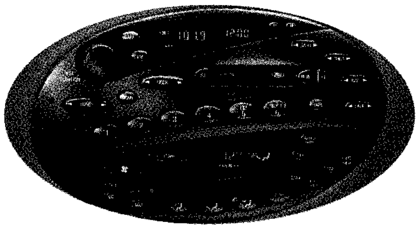

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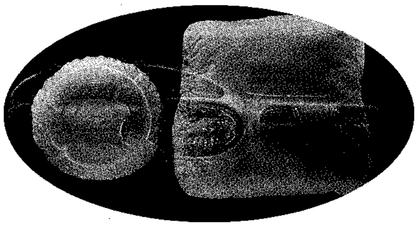

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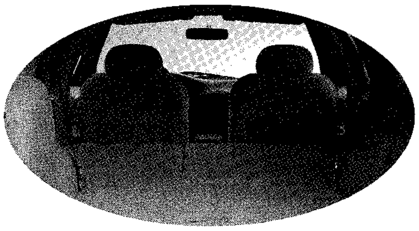

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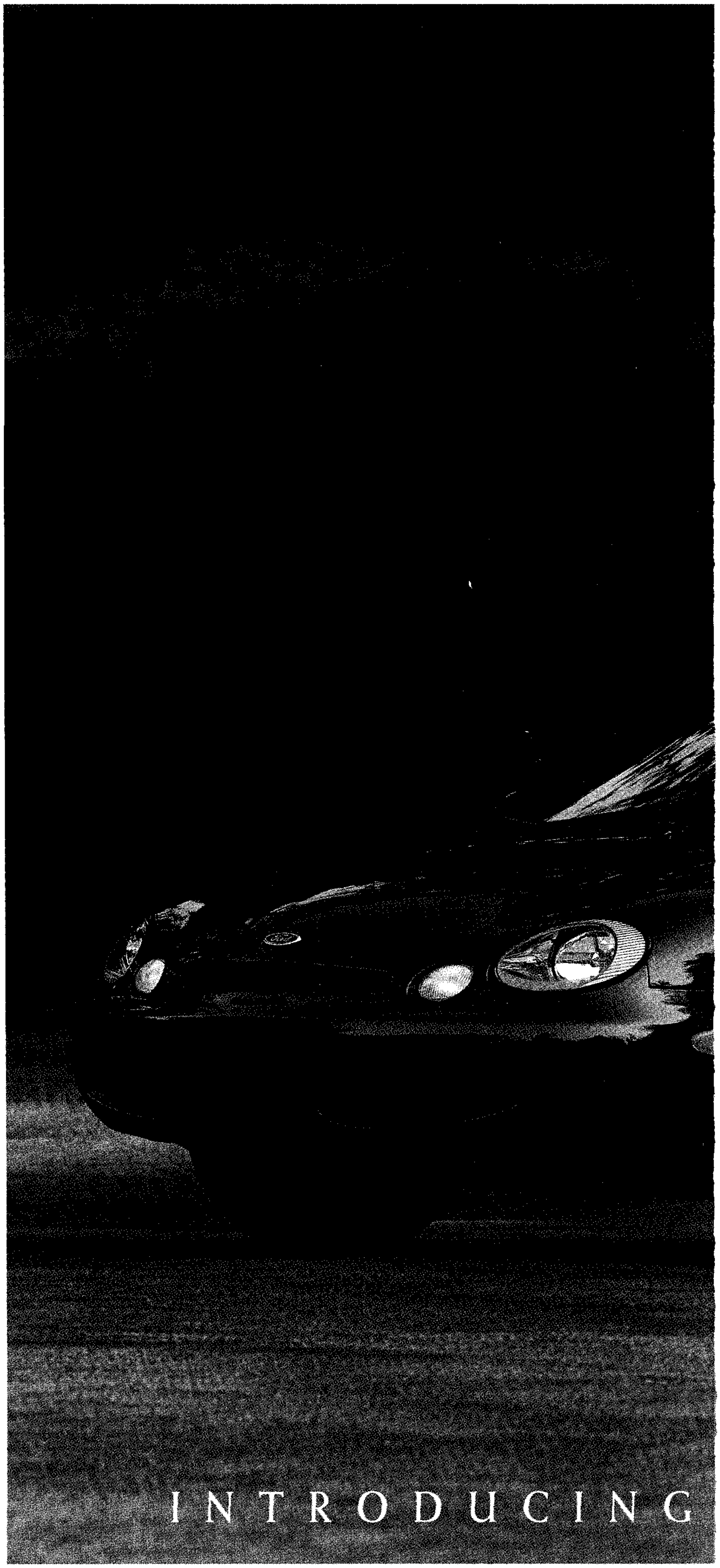

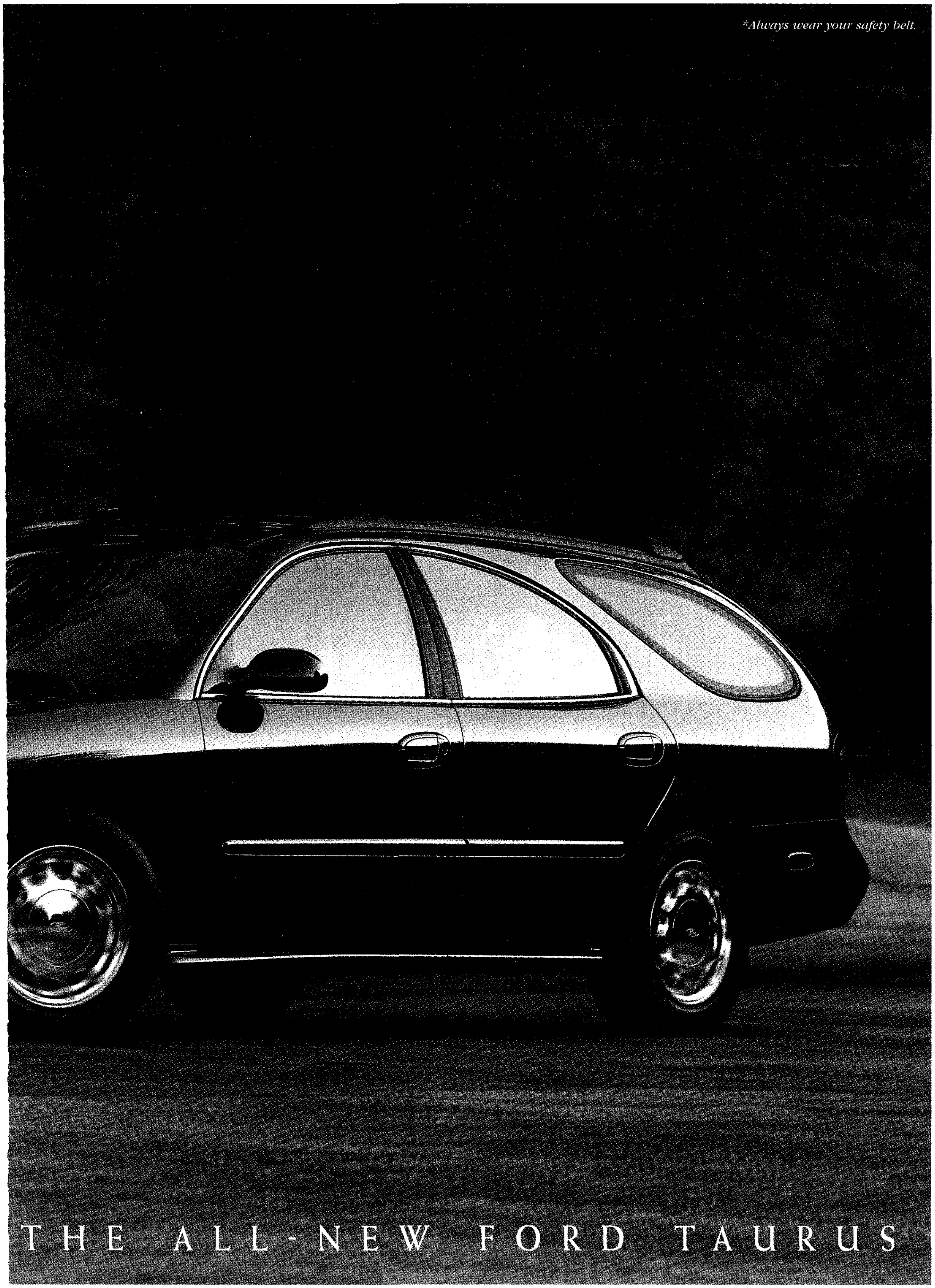
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THE NEW YORKER

DECEMBER 18, 1995

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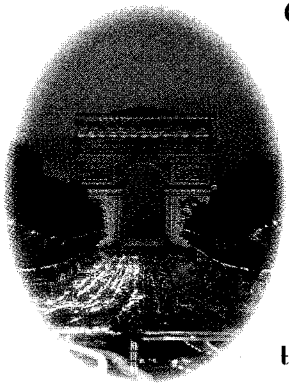

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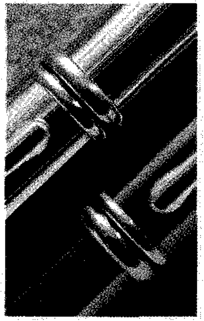

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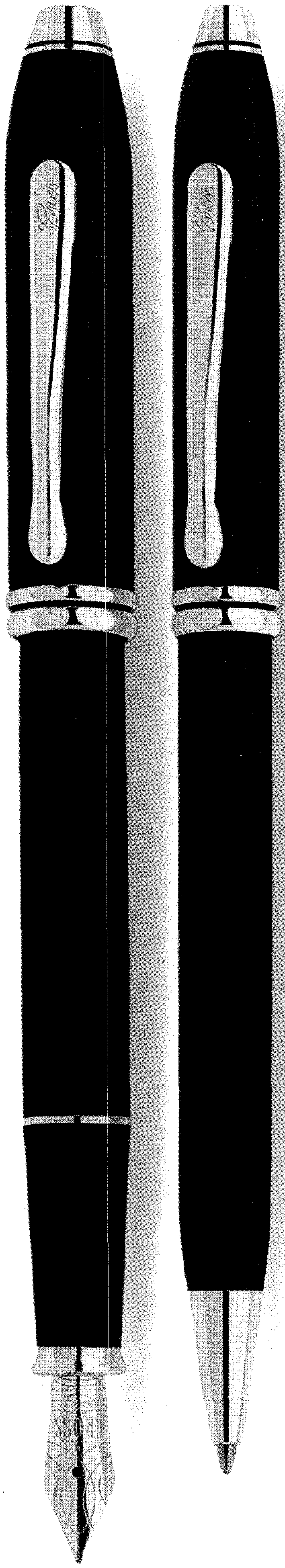

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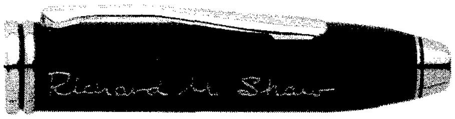

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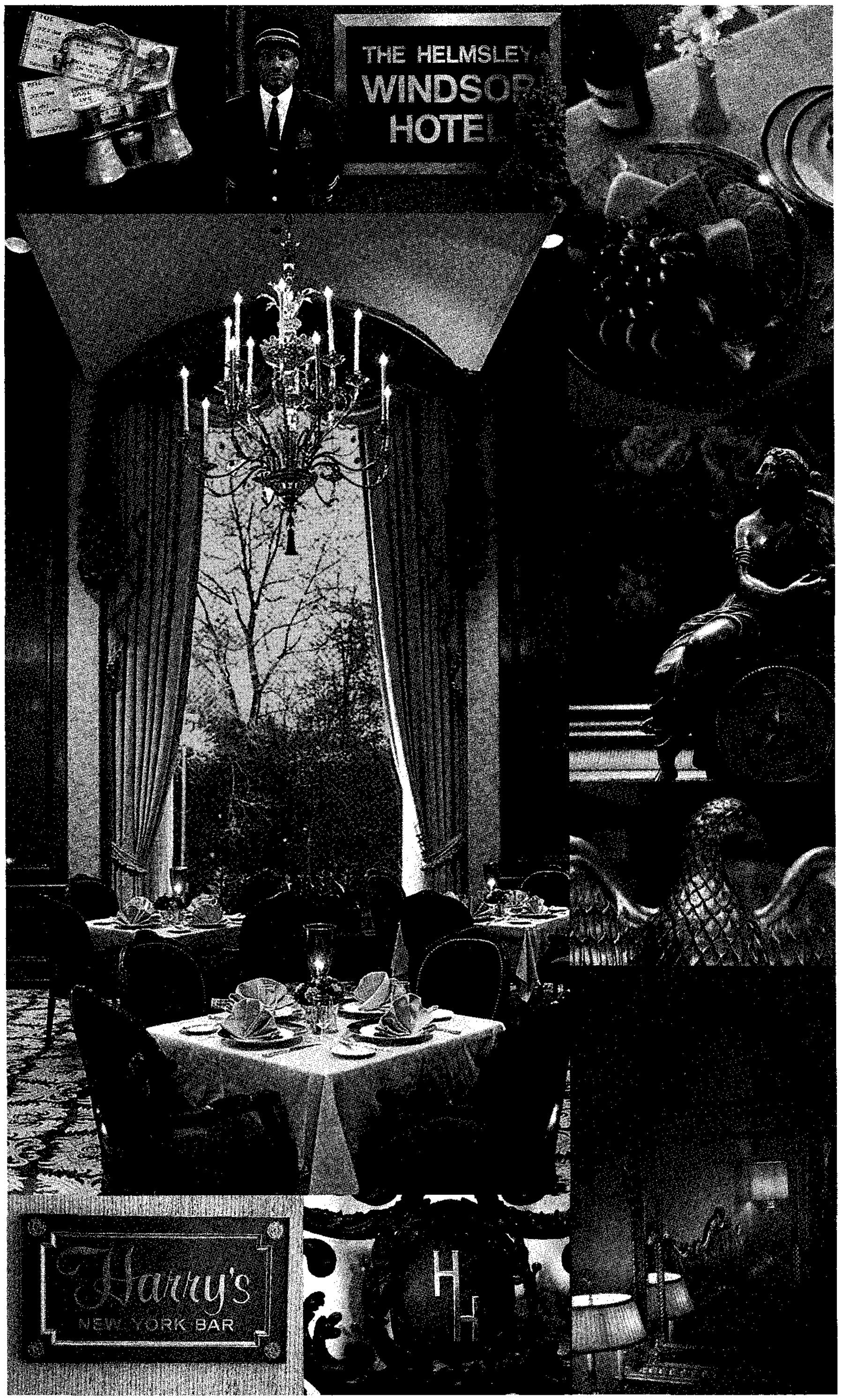

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COMMENT

RESTORATION TRAGEDY

Why Russia's Communists may actually win in a free election.

In the provincial republic of Kalmykia, in southern Russia, the local president, one Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, ruminates upon life on other planets and instructs his sheep-herding people in "ethno-planetary thinking," his ideology for the third millennium. When Ilyumzhinov ran for his office, in 1993, he promised to turn Kalmykia into a "second Kuwait," where the shepherds would all have cellular telephones—to call their friends on Neptune, perhaps. So far, the president's earthly achievements have been limited to the establishment of a regime sufficiently authoritarian that the only opposition newspaper, quaintly called *Soviet Kalmykia Today*, is obliged to publish outside the republic.

The spectacle of post-Communist transition is no less depressing in other corners of the former Soviet Union. The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, said recently that in order to lift his country out of its economic misery he will require powers even more untrammelled than those he already possesses; also, he noted thoughtfully, Adolf Hitler "was not all bad." The President of Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov, has transformed himself from a Communist Party boss into a sultan, creating a cult of personality that combines the grace of Stalinism with the charm of Saddamism. Niyazov's self-proclaimed "gradual" progress toward democracy has been gradual enough to earn his regime a place on the list kept by the New York-based human-rights group Freedom House as one of the twenty-one most repressive governments in the world.

In Russia proper, Boris Yeltsin is at a sanatorium near Moscow recovering from his second heart attack. His condition is not likely to improve on December 17th. Scores of millions of Russians will vote that day in parliamentary elections, and a large majority of them will, in one way or another, register displeasure, even disgust, at what he has done since the collapse of Communist rule, in August of 1991. Although a segment of the urban population clearly values the many new civic and economic freedoms, what used to be called the masses have become utterly disaffected by industrial and agricultural decline, imperial collapse, unchecked organized crime, the rise of economic oligarchies, and the Yeltsin regime's brutal assault on Chechnya—a disaster that cost tens of thousands of lives last winter and is far from over.

Russians long ago stopped talking about Yeltsin as a democrat. Some will vote for his democratic-minded oppo-

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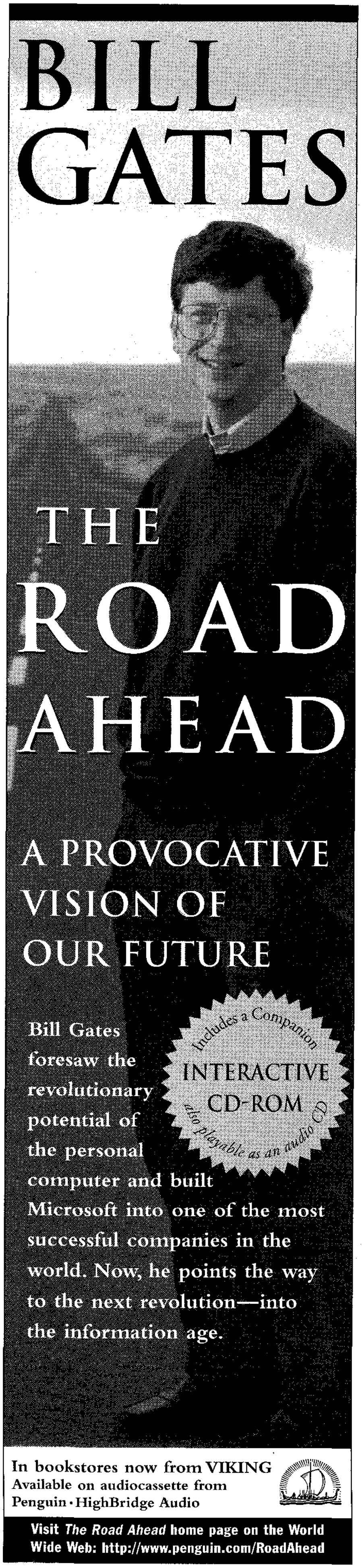

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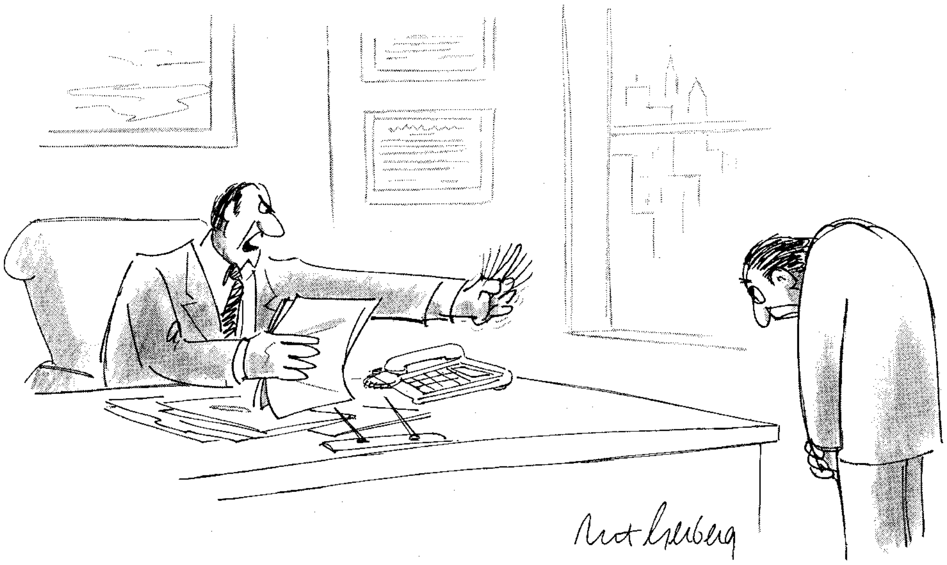

"This is bad work, Edwards! Bad! Bad! Bad! Bad!"

• •

nents, such as the Yabloko party, led by the economist Grigory Yavlinsky. Others will choose nationalist parties, like the Congress of Russian Communities, led by a swaggering former Army general, Aleksandr Lebed, or like the Liberal Democrats, led by the loony (and fading) demagogue Vladimir Zhirinovsky. Still others will moon the entire process with a vote for the Beer Lovers' Party. But the party most likely to be celebrating next week is the one that was supposed to have been consigned to the dustbin of history: the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. Every poll suggests that the question is not whether the Communists will win the largest single bloc of seats in the Duma but, rather, what the size of their plurality will be.

By now, the West has grown accustomed to the curious spectacle of Communists and neo-Communists returning to power in free elections, as in Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Lithuania. There is little to worry about from such quarters. The Central European and Baltic Communists are, for the most part, irrevocably committed to what they once disdained as "bourgeois democracy," and have won office by promising increased social protection for the aged and the poor.

When the leader of today's Russian Communist Party, Gennady Zyuganov, who is an uncharismatic one-time Central Committee apparatchik, visits "Larry King Live" and other Western venues, he, too, talks like a social democrat—a Russian Olof Palme. In Moscow and in his triumphant campaign trips in the provinces, however, he relies on a politics of bitterness and revenge. The heart of Zyuganov's appeal is a general sense that a great people has been humiliated by a conspiracy of domestic betrayers (Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev, among others) and outside "agents of influence" (the C.I.A., NATO, and George Soros, among others). The Communist platform calls for the restoration of the Soviet Union, the renationalization of various industries, and a more aggressive posture toward the United States. Naturally, Zyuganov says, his party will carry out its program through peaceful and legal means—though its record on that score is not exactly reassuring. Western scholars and domestic critics, he maintains, are guilty of defamation when they dare speak of tens of millions of people killed by the old regime; he claims that "only" half a million were executed. "At first, there was criticism of Brezhnev, then of Stalin, then of the period going all the way back to Lenin," Zyuganov said recently. "Today, all that was glorious is eliminated. In our schools today, textbooks scarcely mention Pushkin or Tolstoy, Dostoyevski or Nekrasov. Instead, there is literary and political pornography. And these textbooks are written with the sponsorship of the Soros Foundation. . . . This is done to kill our memory."

Zyuganov's core support comes from the older generation—from retirees who have seen the value of their pensions dwindle, from people who are understandably reluctant to bid an easy farewell to ideas and values that were pounded into them from birth. Zyuganov also thrives on the phenomenon of selective memory. Many Russians have no trouble remembering that six years ago the price of meat was two rubles a kilo but have forgotten that there was no meat. They remember that *Izvestia* cost a few kopecks a copy but forget that the old, Party-sanctioned version of the paper was scarcely worth wrapping fish in, had there been any fish.

The coming Communist victory is the result largely of the fragmented nature of a fledgling political culture. Few of the forty-three parties on the ballot have any grassroots history or support; left, right, and center, the parties are more often makeshift vehicles for various individuals' ambitions. Zyuganov's party is almost unique in that it is able to rely on a committed membership of half a million faithful (still) and a common history (no matter how degraded).

What effect the victory will really have on practical politics is far from clear. The Russian constitution is heavily geared toward Presidential power: the Duma has hardly any role in choosing Cabinet members, and the President's veto is practically impossible to override. People can therefore vote for Communist parliamentarians without worrying about putting the machinery of the state in the Party's hands. Still, in the Duma the Communists could join forces with nationalist parties and force Yeltsin to move even farther away from his last remaining reformist instincts.

A harder test will come in June, with the Presidential elections—assuming that Yeltsin does not step in and cancel them. A state television network has lately been running a series of slick "public service" advertisements featuring a strong yet sensitive young farmer. In one of them, the farmer, after a long day in the fields, takes home an injured rabbit to his young daughter. Over this heartwarming scene of Russian kindness crawls a new sort of slogan for this slogan-weary country: "Everything here will work out." In the long run that may be so. But these days it is not easy to be sure.

—DAVID REMNICK

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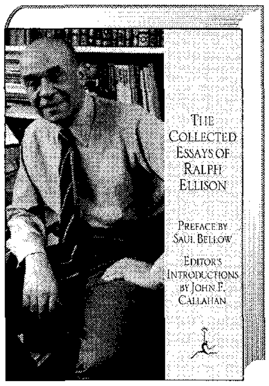
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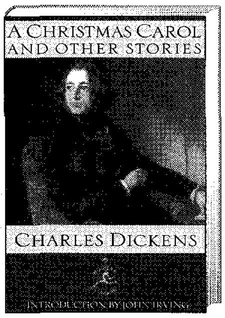
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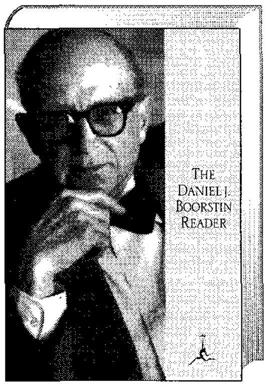

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IN THE MAIL

TALKING TRASH

Your Comment on trash TV ("Geek Shows," by Stephen Schiff, November 6th) brings to mind a hypothesis of mine, which is that many of us with poor self-esteem unconsciously prop ourselves up by looking askance at people who are obviously more pathetic. In many dysfunctional families, for instance, the parents incessantly pontificate to the children about a world populated with jerks. In my family, this overlaid an unconscious belief that I now label the we-may-be-fucked-up-but-we're-a-lot-better-than-they-are philosophy.

PETE WALKER
Lafayette, Ind.

Mr. Schiff asks if trash television really harms anyone. Earlier this year, Scott Amedure and Jonathan Schmitz were guests at a taping of "The Jenny Jones Show," and Amedure revealed that he had a secret crush on Schmitz. Several days later, Schmitz went to Amedure's home with a gun and killed him. It's hard to say that the talk show caused Amedure's death, but without it he might be alive today.

DIRK WILLIAMS
Boston, Mass.

TIME TO INTERCONNECT

It is quite understandable that Stanley Crouch, as Robert S. Boynton mentions ("The Professor of Connection," November 6th), occasionally becomes the flash-point of consternation, and even rage. His acerbic sharpshooting spares no one and he is hardly infallible. Still, when Crouch sets out to consider "Negroes" and "put them in the world," he is clearing the way for "Negroes" to cultivate a sense of greater possibilities. He tenaciously attacks glib approaches such as Afro- or Eurocentrism in order to point out how interconnected the world is and to emancipate people from the language and logic of victimization. Crouch does not seem to be suggesting that we minimize or ignore real injustices; rather, he seems to be demanding that we shape our agendas by the light of the talents of all races. No group stands to gain more from such insight than the "Negroes."

YURI CAMPBELL
Austin, Texas

WORKING WITH BUSTER

Your Buster Keaton story (A Critic at Large, by Anthony Lane, October 23rd) reminded me of the time in the early sixties when I filmed a television commercial with him for the Pure Oil Company.

Buster drives a huge tank truck into a gas station. Gets out. Hooks up the hose to the underground tank and unpacks his lunchbox: table; tablecloth; bud vase with rose; pepper and salt; silverware; sandwich and tea. Behind him, as the fuel goes through the hose, the truck gets smaller and smaller until it's toy-size. Buster packs it into his lunchbox, tucks the table under his arm, and ambles away. It was funny.

"Not funny enough," he said. "Let me try something."

He climbed into the truck, closed the door, and stared into space. Then he opened the door, let his body trickle from the seat to the floor, bumped to the running board, clutched at his hat with one hand and the door with the other, and so down to the ground, where, with dignity, he hooked up the hose. It was hilarious.

ROBERT ROSS
Hendersonville, N.C.

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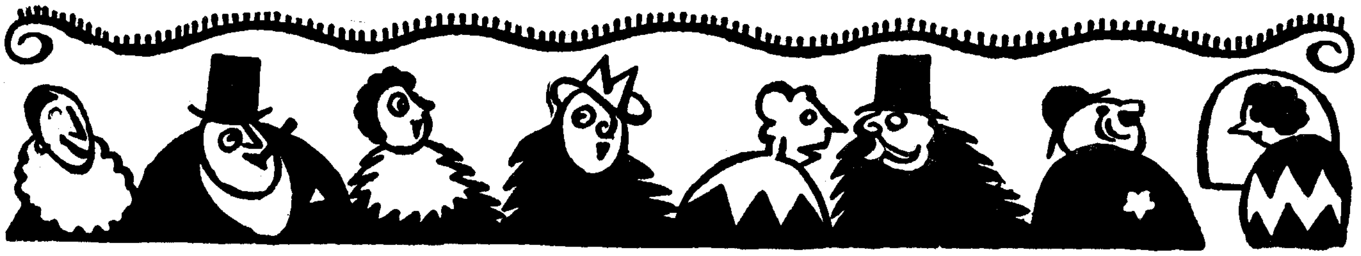

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THE THEATRE

Song of Experience—Mention matinée ladies, and Laura Linney will launch into a song from a seventies revue that she saw when she was a child. She's only thirty-one, but her show-biz memory is practically middle-aged—which might be attributed to her theatrical upbringing (her father is the playwright Romulus Linney). She puts her knowledge to good use in Circle in the Square's highly enjoyable new production of "Holiday," the 1928 Philip Barry classic about a wealthy New York family and a visiting beau, in which she plays the lively-minded Linda Seton. When she needed help with the nuances of upper-crust Manhattan life, she relied less on the film versions of "Holiday" (1930, with Mary Astor; 1938, with Katharine Hepburn) than on her experience in "Six Degrees of Separation," John Guare's contemporary comedy of manners. "I learned so much from that show, night after night," she says, adding, "I wonder how Linda Seton would have fared in the world of John Guare." In "Holiday," Linney proves herself one of those rare actors who can inhabit a character from the past without fussiness. "I try to play the reality of what's happening," she explains, "not just a collection of correct nineteen-twenties mannerisms."

•

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Dick Gregory Live—The comic makes his Off Broadway début. In previews through Dec. 13. Opens Dec. 14 at 8. (Samuel Beckett, 412 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

The Father—A new adaptation, by Richard Nelson, of Strindberg's 1887 tragedy, starring Frank Langella. Directed by Clifford Williams. Previews begin Dec. 14. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Wasp and Other Plays—Four new one-acts by Steve Martin. In previews through Dec. 16. Opens Dec. 17 at 7. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

When Ladies Battle—Eugène Scribe and Ernest Legouvé's 1851 romantic farce. Previews begin Dec. 15. (Pearl, 80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Bring In 'da Noise/Bring In 'da Funk—In attempting not only to return tap to black culture but to give black culture back to tap, director George C. Wolfe and dancer-choreographer Savion Glover have made a drama that charts, with heroic energy, the evolution of the African-American beat from its rural Southern beginnings to its Northern urbanization and on to its present hip-hop incarnation in the choreography of Glover and his homeboy hoofers. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/4/95.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

"Brother Marx Nativity"—The Bread and Puppet Theatre's version of the Christmas story. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes Dec. 17.)

A Christmas Carol—Terrence Mann and Ben Vereen lead a cast of ninety. The score is by Alan Menken. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. Closes Dec. 31.)

Dangerous Corner—As directed by David Mamet, the characters in J. B. Priestley's 1932 mystery—a meditation on the fragile interconnectedness of people's lives—don't seem connected at all. The biggest mystery is why everyone onstage seems so strangely wooden. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 1.)

Double Identity—The message in this Yiddish musical comedy (based on a Sholom Aleichem story) is clear: it's hard to be a Jew. The actors perform with conviction, especially Zypora Spaisman—the matriarch of Yiddish theatre—whose uncomplicated gestures say a great deal. In Yiddish. (Simultaneous English or Russian translation is available.) (Folksbiene Playhouse, 123 E. 55th St. 755-2231.)

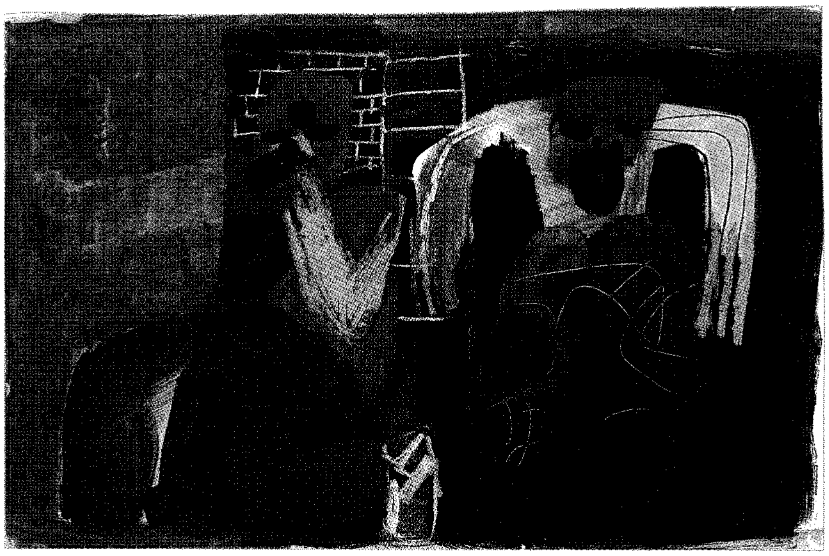
The Duchess of Malfi—Cheek by Jowl's new staging of Webster's Jacobean tragedy continues through Dec. 16. (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100.)

Golden Boy—Joanne Woodward's staging of Clifford Odets' 1937 drama—about a young violinist (Greg Naughton) who gives up music for the boxing ring—starts out slowly and then surprises you with one powerful punch after another. Odets' struggling characters have big hearts, and almost everyone in the ensemble gets a chance to shine—especially Angie Phillips, as Lorna, the tired girl with a past who falls for the hero. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 16.)

Hello, Dolly!—Although there is much to like about Carol Channing, this revival is one long curtain call, and a bit of a strain on the nerves. Lee Roy Reams directed. (11/27/95) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Holiday—Tony Goldwyn and Laura Linney star in a revival of Philip Barry's 1928 comedy, directed by David Warren. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Jam On the Groove—Ten loose-limbed dances—including a slapstick shadow dance, a martial-arts fantasia, a dance-noir detective story, and a shirtless six-man undulation that could serve as a master class on abdominal development—show off the impressive range of hip-hop choreography. All the dancers get the chance to flaunt their patented wiggles and spins, and the house rocks with a sort of call-and-response encouragement from the audience. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)



"Jam On the Groove," at the Minetta Lane Theatre.

ANNABEL WRIGHT

A Family Affair—Russian playwright Aleksandr Ostrovsky's 1850 comedy, about corruption in the merchant class, in a translation by Nick Dear. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 633-1292. Closes Dec. 16.)

The Food Chain—Although the situations in Nicky Silver's new play are familiar and sitcomish, the writing is tangy and memorably funny, and the actors give smart, wonderfully fresh performances. Robert Falls directed. (9/11/95) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Fool Moon—Clowning and music with Bill Irwin, David Shiner, and North Carolina's Red Clay Ramblers. (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Master Class—In Terrence McNally's new drama, Zoe Caldwell plays Maria Callas with steely, divaesque conviction, but the role is merely the sum of all the clichés that have been in circulation for years; the Callas who was a consummate professional and an inspired teacher—and a human being—is missing. Leonard Foglia directed. (11/27/95) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Misanthrope—Falstaff Presents has created a vivid reworking of Molière's arch comedy of social masks gone awry, set in the nineteen-twenties. The rhymed couplets in contemporary English are sometimes too contemporary, but they form a sly, charming connection to the original, and

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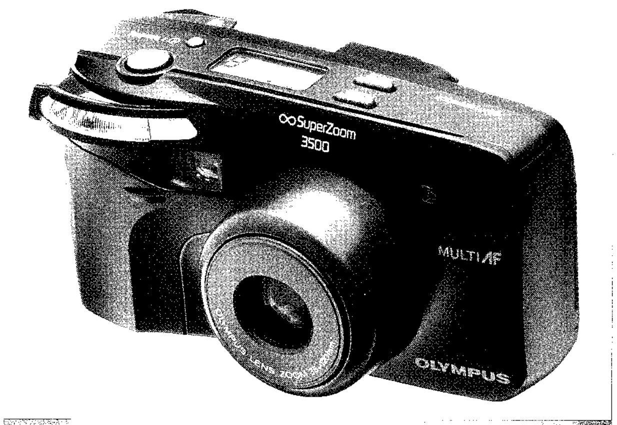

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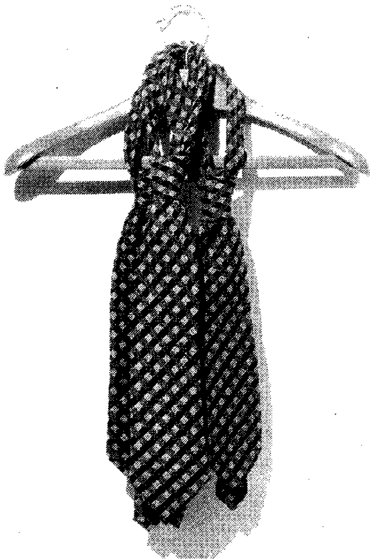

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the cast (particularly the self-possessed Matt Servitto, who plays Philinte) is smart and strong. Unfortunately, the director, Peter Francis James, seems to have decided by the end that the play is really a tragedy: he smothers the wit under shrillness, and the high drama he's trying to create drags down the couplets and the stylized acting that suit satire so well. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 803-5443. Closes Dec. 23.)

MRS. KLEIN—Nicholas Wright's smart though schematic drama dissects the tempestuous relationship between two London psychoanalysts, the famous Melanie Klein (Uta Hagen) and her less renowned daughter, Melitta (Laila Robins). Robins is excellent; Hagen is brilliant. (11/20/95) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

MOLIÈRE'S SHORTS—This adaptation of four of the playwright's comedies throws vaudeville routines, Marx Brothers jokes, and other elements into the mix. (Theatre at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 255-6895. Closes Dec. 23.)

MOON OVER BUFFALO—Ken Ludwig's backstage farce is as forgettable as Carol Burnett is not: our reigning red-headed queen of comedy is delightful to behold. Tom Moore directed. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

MOONLIGHT—Harold Pinter's play stars Jason Robards as a dying man and Blythe Danner as his wife. The director, Karel Reisz, has excavated the suffering beneath their sarcasm and perfectly captured Pinter's sense of dread. (11/6/95) (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Dec. 17.)

MUD—Maria Irene Fornes's 1983 drama about three people on the skids. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 642-5498. Closes Dec. 17.)

MURDER AT MINSING MANOR: A NANCY-BOYS MYSTERY—Another broad, antic romp by the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, in which an aging temptress (Everett Quinton) may or may not have dispatched her sugar daddy. The satire of church, state, and the Hardy Boys is right on target. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 31.)

NEW ENGLAND—The crack cast members in Richard Nelson's latest play portray seven Britons and a Frenchwoman living in America who gather in Connecticut to mourn a death but end up complaining about their adopted country. The crowning irony is that they've all chosen to live here. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Dec. 22.)

NIXON'S NIXON—A new play by Russell Lees, set during a secret meeting on the night before the President's resignation. (MCC, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes Dec. 23.)

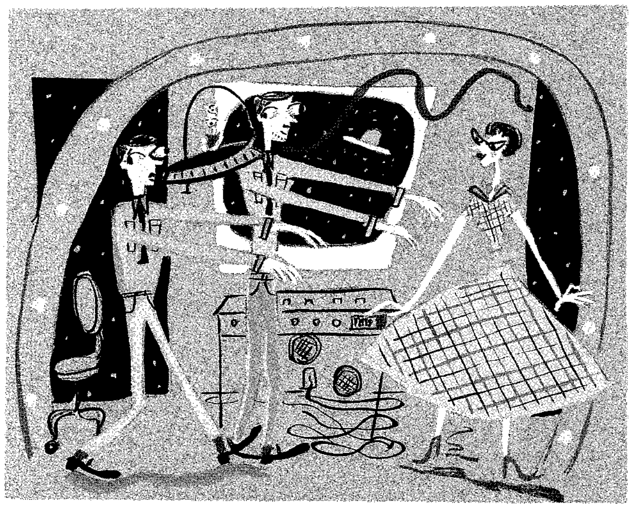
NORTHEAST LOCAL—Tom Donaghy's drama stars Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio and Anthony LaPaglia as a working-class couple who come together and then break apart. Both the writing and the performances make for an uneven evening, but LaPaglia gives the play an authenticity it wouldn't otherwise have. Gerald Gutierrez directed. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

OBLIVION POSTPONED—Ron Nyswaner's comedy-drama about a straight Ohio couple and a gay New York couple who meet in Rome. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

PICASSO AT THE LAPIN AGILE—Steve Martin's comedy, set in a Paris bar in 1904, features Einstein (Mark Nelson) and Picasso (Tim Hopper) sittin' around talkin' about how they're going to change the world, and contains a satisfying amount of Martin's coolly absurdist humor—but there's a certain sourness to the proceedings which may put you off. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

QUILLS—A Grand Guignol take on the Marquis de Sade's final imprisonment, at the Charenton asylum outside Paris, complete with wildly abandoned performances, spooky lighting, a surreal set, rich costumes, and macabre humor. Doug Wright's drama points out the slippery nature of morality a couple of times too many, perhaps, but it's thought-provoking, frightening, often very funny, and full of delicious dirty talk. Directed by Howard Shalwitz. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475. Closes Dec. 22.)

RACING DEMON—David Hare's 1990 drama is an examination of spiritual politics in the Anglican Church as played out in a conflict between two priests in a poor part of London, and it asks questions that go beyond the merely parochial. Richard Eyre, who directed, has assembled a fine cast that is able to bring Hare's big ideas to life: Josef Sommer and Michael Cumpsty play the priests at odds with each other; Brian Murray and Paul Giamatti are delightful as their associates; and Kathleen Chalfant, George N. Martin, and John C. Venema are all memorable in smaller roles. (12/11/95) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 31.)



Matt McClanahan, Robert Boles, and Suzanne Graff, in "Zombies from the Beyond."

THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY—Tourneur's 1607 Senecan drama, presented by the Independent Theatre Company. After Dec. 16, the show takes a hiatus, returning on Jan. 3. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088.)

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL—The calumny is heaped as high as the wigs in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's 1777 comedy of manners, but this National Actors Theatre production, directed by Gerald Freedman and starring Simon Jones and Tony Randall, doesn't provide the acid or the snap it takes to bring the coterie of slanderers to life. Tom Hewitt stands out in the role of Charles Surface. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280. Closes Dec. 30.)

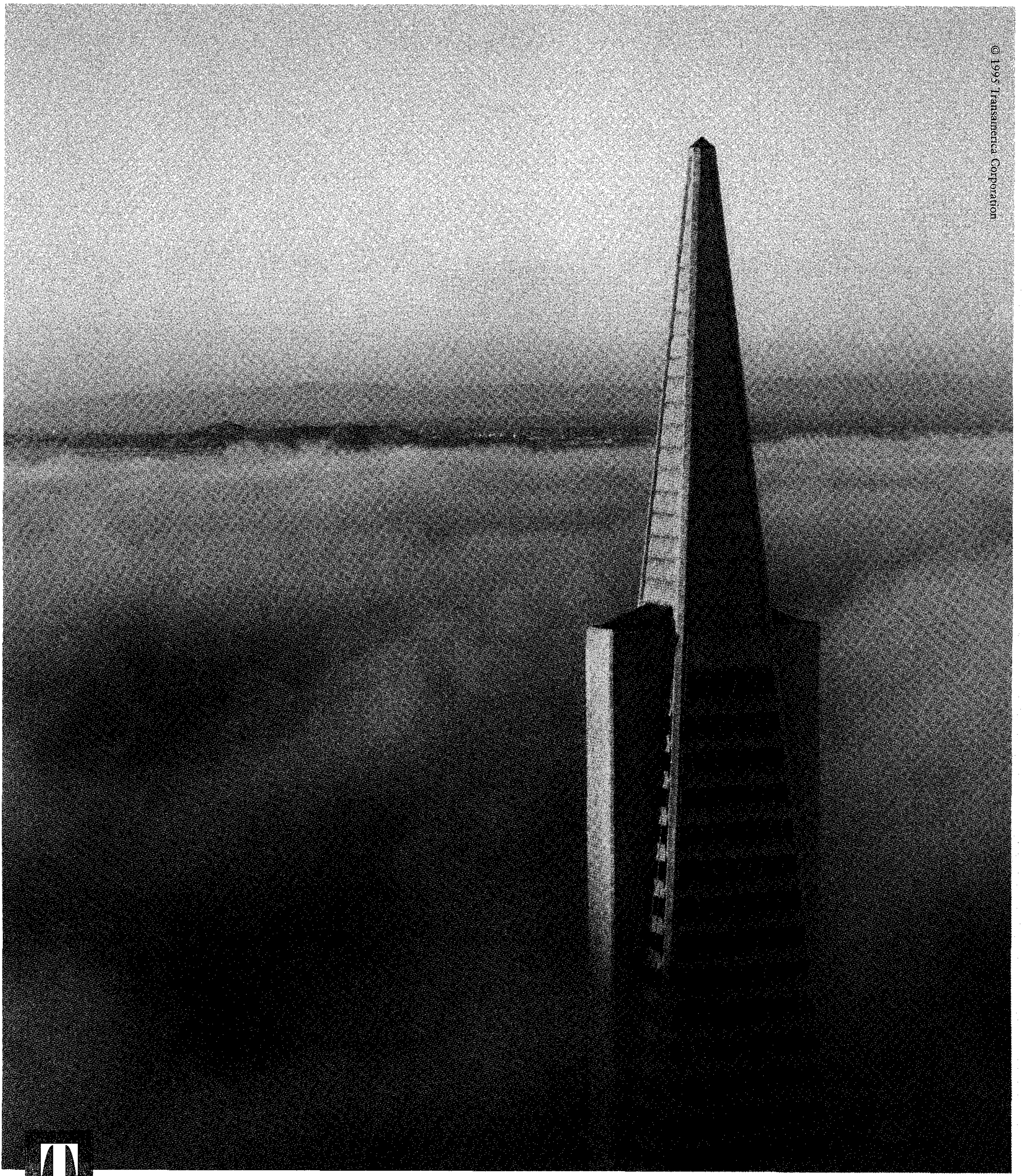
SHIMMER—A man (Jud Meyers) recounts his escape at age fifteen from a juvenile-detention center, in John O'Keefe's one-man play. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Dec. 17.)

SWINGING ON A STAR—A stylish, heartfelt showcase for Johnny Burke's songs. The cast and band are nearly perfect; the show was written and directed by Michael Leeds and choreographed, brilliantly, by Kathleen Marshall. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE TEMPEST—In George C. Wolfe's acrylic version, the pyrotechnics (drummers, Indonesian shadow puppets, Brazilian stilt walkers) and the Prospero (Patrick Stewart) excite the audience without illuminating it; you leave remembering the sounds and the spectacle but not one vivid line of the poetry. (12/4/95) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 31.)

VALLEY SONG—The South African playwright Athol Fugard appears with Lisa Gay Hamilton in

BETH ADAMS



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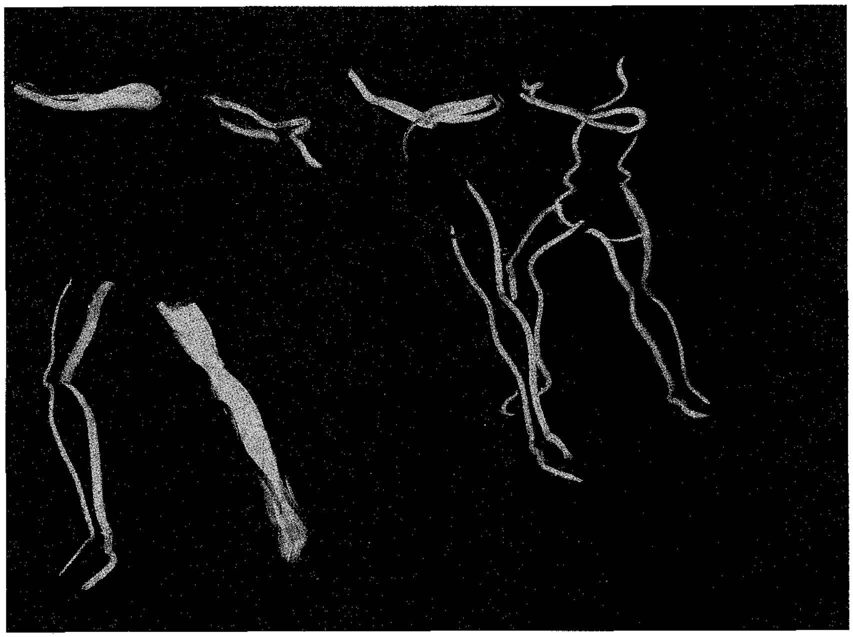
his new drama, about the effects of political change in his homeland. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Victor/Victoria—Julie Andrews, Tony Roberts, and Michael Nouri in a theatrical version of the 1982 movie. The score (by Henry Mancini) is generic and the book (by Blake Edwards, who also directed) patchwork. The leggy Rachel York, as a blond bimbo, at least enjoys herself—and the audience enjoys her, too. (11/20/95) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Zombies from the Beyond—The many songs in James Valcq's musical sendup of fifties science-fiction movies are funny, and the cast—particularly Claire Morkin, as the competent ingénue who has to save the world's men from the lascivious Zombettes—is cartoonish perfection. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)



Neil Greenberg's "Disco Project," at P.S. 122.

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

LONG RUNS

AFTER-PLAY: Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DEATH DEFYING ACTS:** Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **HAVING OUR SAY:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. (Closes Dec. 31.) . . . **THE HEIRESS:** Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. (Closes Dec. 31.) . . . **HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PARTY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **SYLVIA:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

DANCE

Elizabeth Streb Ringside—In a fortresslike industrial building in Long Island City, the slender, agile choreographer Elizabeth Streb clambers over metal scaffolding, making minute adjustments to some odd rigging; then she descends to rally her troupe. First using portable walls, then a seventeen-foot-high pole, and finally a fantastically sprung trampoline, the eight dancers run through their improbable signature moves: "skudges," slams, body pops, suicide dives, inside-outs, and castaways. Even when Streb joins the action, her laser gaze never leaves her performers. Here in this vast cold sunlit room, she looks surprisingly bird-boned, but, like St. Joan before Orleans, she is preparing for battle: when she crosses the river to conquer the Joyce, her enemies will be gravity and complacency, her armor a leotard and mousse. "I don't feel I have an agenda for the audience," she says. "They come with their own, obviously. But if it works, I can suspend a certain kind of expectation and take them for a ride: a pure physical experience." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Dec. 13-16 and Dec. 19 at 8; and Dec. 17 at 2 and 7:30. Through Dec. 31.)

"The Disco Project"—In last season's "Not-About-AIDS-Dance," choreographer Neil Greenberg used slides with simple sentences—"Ellen was a big pothead in high school," "This is the first material I made after my brother died"—intimate, insider comments that seemed to be whispered in your ear. Music (a snatch of "La Bohème," a riff of Judy Garland) played in sporadic, introspective surges, like tunes in your head. In Greenberg's new work, "The Disco Project"—the companion piece to "Not-About-AIDS-Dance"—the brief texts, with their rueful, funny notations and unsentimental reports of personal loss, appear again, but after a silence the music finally bursts forth, and for one full song—Sylvester's seventies cowbell classic "Do You Want to Funk?"—the ensemble responds with some snappy, showstopping dancing. "For a moment while I was making that disco section, I felt like Bob Fosse," Greenberg said after a recent rehearsal. "For the first time ever in a Neil Greenberg piece, we count, to eight, and then again—just like real dancers!" (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Dec. 14-17 at 9.)

"The Nutcracker"—The New York City Ballet returns with its holiday heartwarmer. The performance schedule caters to early bedtimes, so read those tickets carefully. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Dec. 13-14 and Dec. 19 at 6, Dec. 15 at 8, Dec. 16 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 17 at 1 and 5. Through Dec. 31.)

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre—Dec. 13 at 8: "The Winter in Lisbon," "Scissors Paper Stone," "Urban Folk Dance," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 8: "Hymn," "Fathers and Sons," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 8: "Night Creature," "Fandango," "Shelter," and "The Winter in Lisbon." . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 2: "Riverside" and "Carmina Burana." . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 8: "Fathers and Sons," "Scissors Paper Stone," "Urban Folk Dance," and "Memoria." . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 3: "Night Creature," "Treading," "Urban Folk Dance," "Scissors Paper Stone," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 7:30: "Fathers and Sons," "Shelter," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 19 at 8: "Blues Suite," "Cry," "Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder," and "Revelations." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through Dec. 31.)

Mark Morris Dance Group—Dec. 15 at 8 and Dec. 17 at 3: "A Spell," "The Office," "Bedtime," "Somebody's Coming to See Me Tonight," and "World Power." . . . ¶ Dec. 13-14 and Dec. 16 at 8: "Lucky Charms," "Rondo," "Jesu, Meine Freude," and "Grand Duo." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Urban Bush Women—The dance world's answer to Sweet Honey in the Rock presents works by company choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, including "Batty Moves." (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. Dec. 13-14 at 8. For more information, call 996-1100.)

Risa Jaroslaw & Dancers—The company appears in two works, "Book Song Woman Man" and "A Jew in Poland," about the choreographer's heritage, as well as the première of "Bertha," inspired by "Jane Eyre." (Playhouse 91. Dec. 16 at 8 and Dec. 17 at 3 and 8.)

"White"—Choreographer and performance artist Ann Carlson collaborates with composers Pierce Turner and Andy Kirshner, installation artist Todd Gilens, and video artist Mary Ellen Strom on an evening-length work that features large pedestrians, a bride auctioneer, blind dancers, nuns, and the choreographer on a pedestal in a wedding gown. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Dec. 13-16 at 8. Through Dec. 23.)

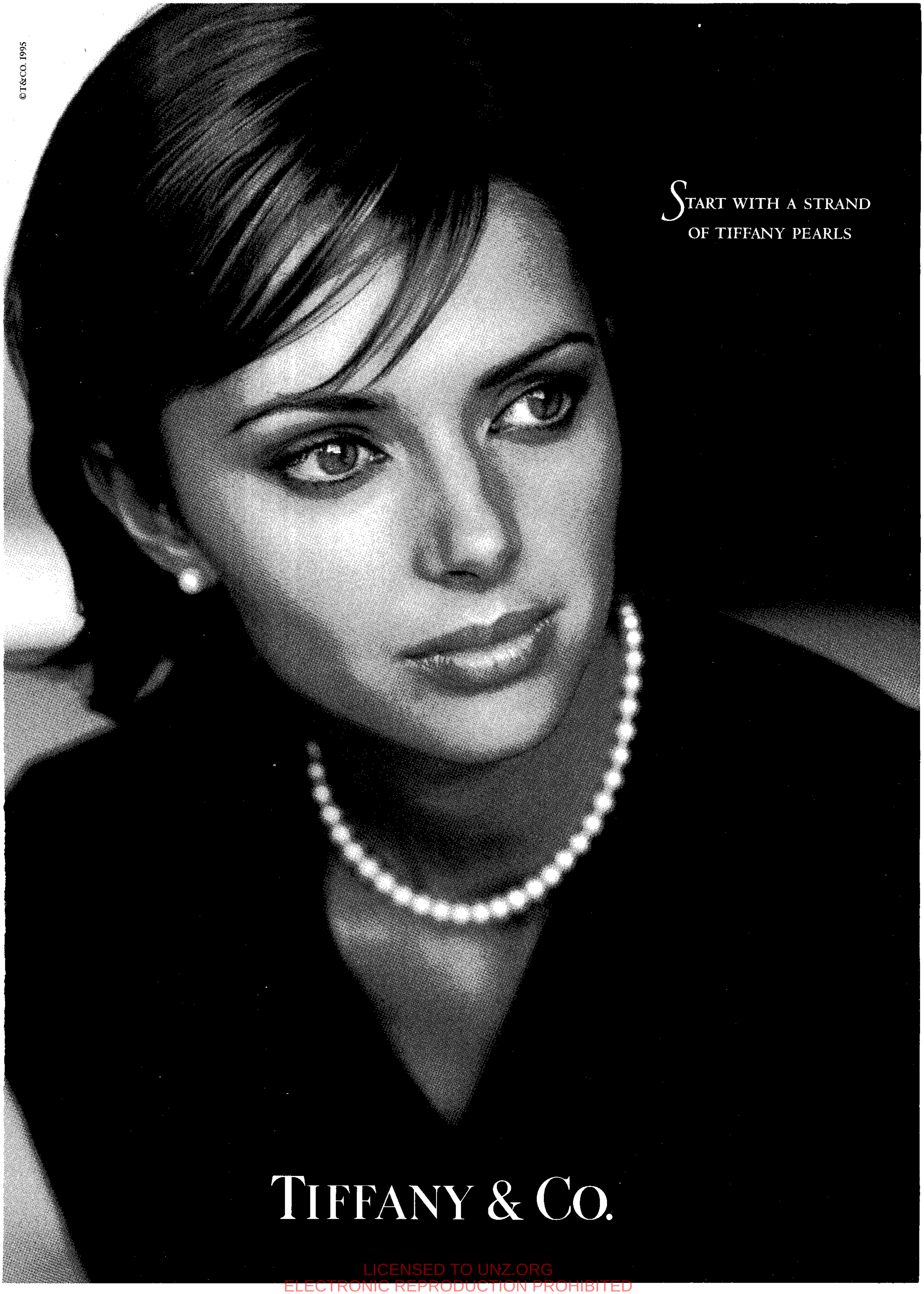
Danspace Showcases—A three-day forum, with more than twenty companies presenting work in segments running anywhere from ten to thirty minutes. Dec. 15 at 11 P.M.: Bebe Miller Company and Urban Bush Women. . . . ¶ Dec. 16, from 6 to 10: Fifteen performances, including works by Mark Dendy, Paula Josa-Jones, Neta Pulvermacher and Dancers, and Gus Solomons Company/Dance. . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 3: Wally Cardona, Mary Abrams and Nami Yamamoto, John Jasperse, and Donna Uchizono. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194.)

"Masao"—Choreographer Kumiko Kimoto and her four dancers present versions of the life of a Korean Everyman victimized by racism in postwar Japan. (Danspace Project. 674-8194. Dec. 14-15 and Dec. 17-18 at 8:30.)

Ronald K. Brown/Evidence—Choreographer Brown has tailored his narrative dance "Lessons"—about the ways that attitudes about death are passed on—to the confines of the sculpture court of the Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris. (120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. Dec. 14-15 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

"Familias"—Installation artist Pepón Osorio and choreographer Merián Soto collaborate on a full-length work about family life in the South Bronx. (Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, Grand Concourse at 149th St., the Bronx. 1-718 518-4455. Dec. 15-16 at 7:30 and Dec. 17 at 3.)

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo—The bourrée boys—Ludmila Beaulemova, Vanya Verikosa, Igor Slopokin, et al.—take on such ballet classics as "Swan Lake" and Le Corsaire." (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Dec. 13-15 at 8, Dec. 16 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 17 at 3.)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NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN—His seven-city solo acoustic tour touches down for the second of two nights—forget about tickets. A stadiumload of fans will feel left out, but those who miss the show might ask themselves if they really needed to hear the austere new songs from "The Ghost of Tom Joad" and ten or so equally melancholy numbers from "Nebraska" and "Darkness on the Edge of Town" performed live anyway. "Tom Joad" has its audacious moments, but when Springsteen strains to update Steinbeck and Woody Guthrie, he's cruising on retreads. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Dec. 13 at 8.)

BOB DYLAN / PATTI SMITH—Having explored two of the world's great religions, Dylan recently checked into cyberspace; his landmark "Highway 61 Revisited" can now be purchased on CD-ROM, as "Highway 61 Interactive." / She's never regretted making the transition from earth mother to mom, and she even seems slightly embarrassed by her reputation as a seer. But put a band behind her and thunderheads still start to gather. For this engagement, Tom Verlaine joins Lenny Kaye on guitar. (Beacon Theatre. Dec. 14 at 8.)

"JAZZ: THE NEW GENERATION"—A concert featuring the T. S. Monk sextet and other sons of famous fathers. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Dec. 14 at 8.)

PAUL WINTER'S "SOLSTICE LIVE"—This festival of music and dance, anticipating the longest night of the year, brings eighteen African-American percussionists, the Forces of Nature Dance Theatre Company, and gospel singer Theresa Thomason to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Dec. 14-15 at 8, and Dec. 16 at 2 and 8.)

"GIRLS NIGHT OUT"—An evening of cabaret and comedy with Kim Criswell and Julie Budd. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 16 at 7:30 and 10.)

"WE'LL TAKE MANHATTAN"—The Big Apple is always worth a musical salute; this gig presents some of the city's finest—saxman Joe Lovano, bassist Christian McBride, and pianist Stephen Scott—weighing in with long-form rhapsodies. If it worked for Gershwin, why shouldn't it work for these guys? (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Dec. 16 at 8.)

HASSAN HAKMOUN—When Peter Gabriel introduced the Moroccan singer, dancer, and sintir player at Woodstock two summers ago as one of his favorite artists in the world, the ensuing flourish of percussion and microtonal singing was probably a bit much for the mud-caked hordes. On that occasion, Hakmoun was appearing with his North African funk band, Zahar. Now you can catch the dreadlocked whirlwind with a small ensemble in a more restrained mode; he'll be performing Arab and Berber popular songs, most of which draw upon mystic ceremonies that date back more than three hundred years. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Dec. 16 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** is in the midst of an extended run. Dining.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Dec. 15-16: The Joe Chambers quintet. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Dec. 17: the **STANLEY TURRENTINE** quintet. You judge a tenor player like Turrentine not by his virtuosity or his ideas but by his sound: a gritty, soulful calling card. He recently pledged new allegiance to his jazz roots, and, cleansed of his pop-funk noodling, he's now making quite a show of himself. The **JOE HENDERSON DOUBLE RAINBOW** sextet begins a weeklong run on Dec. 19. As more and more of Stan Getz started creeping into Henderson's understated style, it was probably inevitable that he, too, would turn to Brazilian music and the extraordinay songs of Antonio Carlos Jobim. And not since Getz has any saxophonist so effortlessly melded melody and sinuous rhythm. In performance, he rarely goes beyond a minimalist accompaniment of bass and drums, but when he confronts the bossa nova he gets a tad more adventurous: the Double Rainbow sextet features guitar (Mike Stern), trumpet (Claudio Roditi), and extra percussion. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, drummers compete for your ear. Truth and beauty usually prevail. Through Dec. 16: a trio featuring **KENNY BARRON, BEN RILEY**, and **RAY DRUMMOND.**

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—After twenty-eight years at the Café Carlyle, **BOBBY SHORT** is polished to such a high gloss that he's almost blinding to behold. Everything he does is breathlessly paced: tempos accelerate, notes ascend, hands clap, teeth flash. His speech has the arcane ring that comes from travelling in glamorous circles (if not in the real world, certainly in his head): "You're a knockout!" "What an audience!" "How chic!" "Wow!" Just as your attention begins to flag, he shifts gears and does ten minutes of blues with cheeky conviction. But all his mannerisms really come into focus the minute he sings Cole Porter, which turns everything else into a warmup. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** is in attendance.

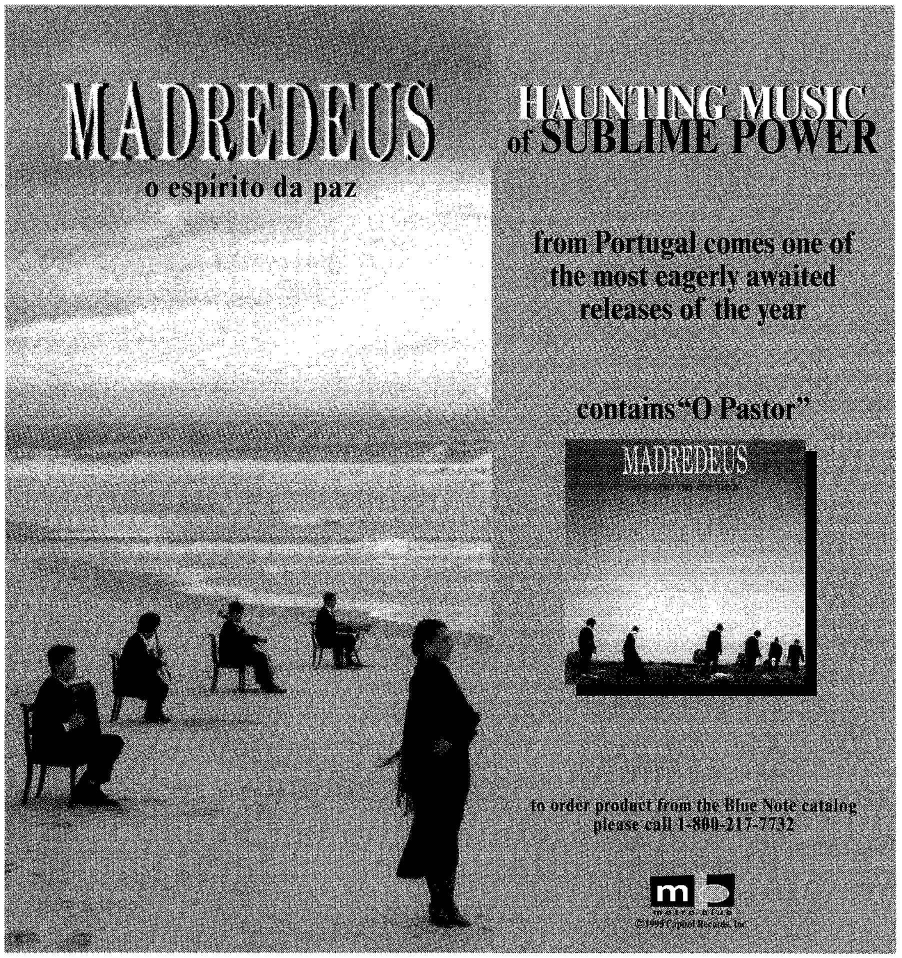
FIFTY SEVEN FIFTY SEVEN, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A sleek piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Dining.

FIVE SPOT, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—**MULGREW MILLER** (Dec. 15-16) is a product of Memphis, a town whose jazz pianists invariably fall under the looming, legendary shadow of Phineas Newborn. Miller tested his mettle with Art Blakey in the eighties; he can be loquacious, but his grand touch and sweeping attack are never overwhelming. Dining.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. Through Dec. 17: the **ERIC REED** quintet. Bandleader Wynton Marsalis has a real ear for pianists, and Reed, his latest hire, is no exception. He may traffic in Hancockisms and Tynerisms, but a distinctive gospel touch enriches his work. Beginning Dec. 19: the **SONNY SIMMONS** trio and the **DAVID MURRAY** quintet. In the early sixties, altoist Simmons was a West Coast Ornette Coleman: a ferocious avant-gardist with a savage tone, rhythmic verve, and enough blues to keep it honest. But the decades passed and he retreated into footnotedom. Last year, with the release of "Ancient Ritual," Simmons returned, as bloodthirsty as ever. His gigs here last year were house-rocking affairs. Murray, the great hope of the eighties, remains a contender; his galvanic tenor-saxophone work is still capable of toppling buildings. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass figurine lamps. Dec. 13-16: Piano and bass with **BILL MAYS** and **DAVID FINCK.**

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Dec. 13-14: Multiculti jazz with **RANDY WESTON'S AFRICA RHYTHMS** and **JERRY GONZALEZ AND THE FORT APACHE BAND.** Weston has steeped himself in the music of North Africa, but there's still plenty of Brooklyn bop left in his piano. Combining the jagged pith of Thelonious Monk, the fragrant harmony of Duke Ellington, and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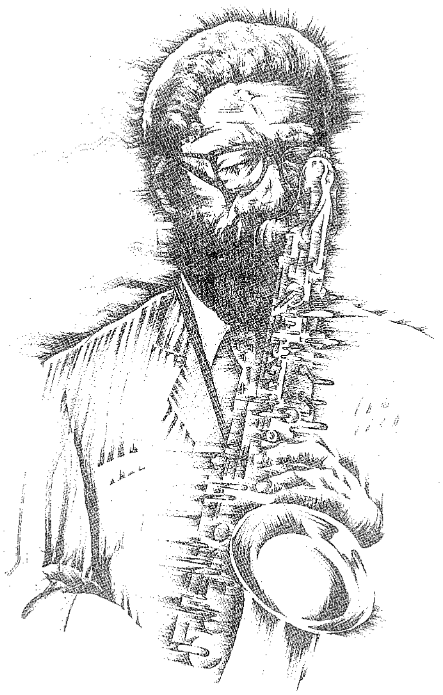
the nasty rhythm of Bud Powell, he has a musical personality as urban as the M.T.A. As for Gonzalez and his band: John Coltrane experimented with all manner of genres, but he never got around to Latin music; they fill that gap with modal vamps and clamoring percussion. Dec. 16: The **JACKY TERRASSON** trio. Terrasson is a defiantly eccentric pianist, the kind of bursting-at-the-seams talent that continually walks the line between daring jaunts of imagination and isn't-this-just-shocking mannerisms. Youthful mischief aside, he is definitely a comer, and he's developed a true trio sound with a little help from bassist Ugonna Okegwo and the remarkable drummer Leon Parker.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. Vocalist **LESLIE GORE** is the star in residence. It's her party through mid-January. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

SMALLS, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Dec. 17: the **MICHAEL CARVIN** quartet. Carvin upholds the old adage that drummers make good bandleaders. He encourages his judiciously chosen sidemen to stretch out, while his whiplash accents enforce any necessary discipline. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Dec. 17: the **JACKIE MC LEAN** sextet. McLean is a heated improviser with avant urges and a band that complements his virtuosity. On a good night, he reigns supreme among altoists. **EASTERN REBELLION,** a quartet that's built from its rhythm section up, takes over for a week starting Dec. 19. The founding members, pianist Cedar Walton and drummer Billy Higgins, along with bassist David Williams, lay down a velvet carpet on which the excellent sax player Vincent Herring rides. With Walton and Higgins at their best, the interplay among the foursome can border on the profound. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.



KEVIN PYLE

Joe Henderson, at the Blue Note.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Dec. 13-14: The **JOHN ABERCROMBIE** trio. Working with an organ player over the last few years has toughened up Abercrombie's guitar. The lyricism that characterized his ECM heyday is still in place; his wispiness, however, has been turned into bluesy muscle. Dec. 15-16: The **CHICO FREEMAN** quintet and the **FRED HERSCH** trio.

ZINC BAR, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Through Dec. 14: the **JOE DIORIO** trio. In the grand tradition of Tal Farlow, this guitarist made his mark and then disappeared into legend. He's a sleek modernist with a bebop bedrock, and he still has that celebrated agility and intelligence. Welcome back. With bassist Steve LaSpina. Sundays feature Brazilian jazz.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. Through Dec. 16: piano and bass with Roger Kellaway and Michael Moore.

ROCK, ETC.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Dec. 14: A hepcat double bill with **ROSIE FLORES AND WANDA JACKSON** and **LITTLE ISIDORE AND THE INQUISITORS.** "Rockabilly Filly," the latest by the Austin-based singer and guitar slinger, deftly resurrects the finger-in-the-socket spirit of nineteen-fifties rockabilly. Joining Flores is the "(Let's Have a) Party" girl herself, "Fujiyama Mama" Wanda Jackson. According to the liner notes of Little Isidore's recent greatest-hits (or so he says) album, "No One Gets Hurt," the nineteen-fifties teen sensation was a Japanese war orphan who was adopted by a Brooklyn family, became infatuated with rock and roll, and enjoyed a brief but memorable career as a singer and actor before disappearing thirty years ago without a trace. Rumor has it that he's actually the alter ego

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of songwriter David Forman. No matter what the story, once you hear his amazing versions of doo-wop classics like "Whispering Bells," you'll be a believer. Dec. 15: **LEON REDBONE.** When he first emerged in the early seventies, chortling Blind Blake, Jimmie Rodgers, and Bing Crosby songs and looking like Groucho Marx's long-lost twin, he seemed more apparition than flesh and blood. Twenty years later, God bless him, he still does.

BROWNIES, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—East Village folk troubadour **DANIEL CARTIER** swings by on Dec. 13. The **CANDY BUTCHERS** are in the house on Dec. 16.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—A narrow, graffiti-strewn cave packed every evening with new and used bands.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dec. 15-16: **BO DIDDLEY.** Those pounding tomtoms, those sinewy maracas, that distorted, fuse-blowing guitar. Call it hambone, call it shave and a haircut, two bits, call it anything you want—it's still going to be the Bo Diddley beat. And once it gets you in its clutches, it's impossible to shake loose.

THE COOLER, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel vault deep in the heart of the meat district. The Groove Collective appears on Dec. 16.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Dec. 15-16: The **LOSER'S LOUNGE,** an ad-hoc coalition of local musicians and the occasional big name, disembowels the music of Burt Bacharach. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Dec. 16: The **AMPS.** . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday. The dancers share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Dec. 19: Keyboardist **STEVE NIEVE** (pronounced "naïve"), a charter member of Elvis Costello's Attractions, the ultimate punk-pop band. Nieve's best work includes the incendiary "This Year's Model" (1978) and the lush "King of America" (1986), along with several other albums with the great man. The group disbanded in 1978, but Nieve and his colleagues have been working with their old boss again, thanks to the 1994 reunion album, "Brutal Youth." This show will find him alone at the piano, performing solo material and a tune or three from the Costello canon.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Dec. 15: The **GEFKENS.**

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Dec. 13-14: **HOLLY COLE.** "Temptation," Cole's collection of Tom Waits songs, is fuelled by upright bass, brushstroked drums, and bluesy piano. She's a big talent—a growling, gritty version of Rickie Lee Jones. Dec. 17: **PHOEBE LÉGÈRE.** Dec. 19: **NANCY BOY.**

S.O.B.'S, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Dining.

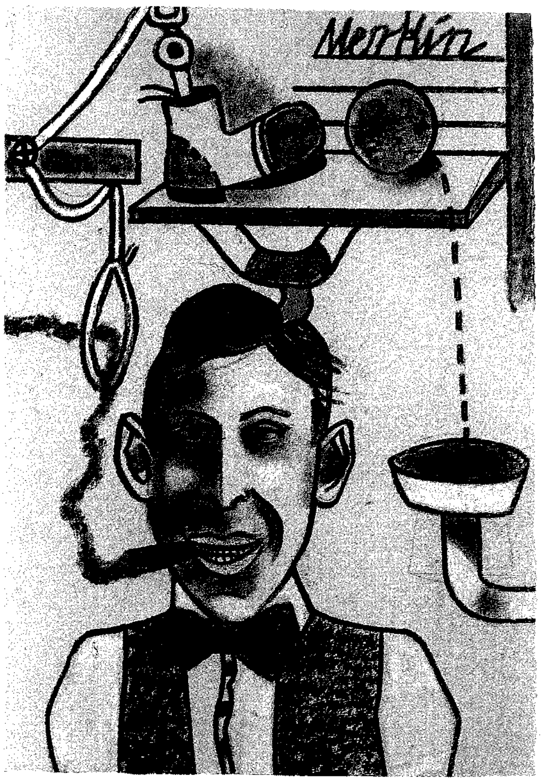
TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Dec. 15-16: The **FUNKY METERS.** Founded in the mid-sixties by keyboardist Art Neville, this strutting gumbo band is to New Orleans R. & B. what the MGs are to Memphis soul—the real thing.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Dec. 13: Singer-songwriter Ruth Gerson. Monday nights are Konkrete Jungle, an evening of dub, jungle, and trip-hop.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Haute Couture." Detail and tailoring are the focus in the Costume Institute's examination of high fashion since 1870, from Worth to Lacroix. . . . ¶ "John Singleton Copley in America." Paintings, pastels, and miniatures by the first American artist to achieve international renown. The exhibition focusses on works executed before 1774, the year the loyalist Copley departed for England; the consensus is that his plainspoken, quintessentially American portraits far surpass in quality and psychological acuity the smooth product he later churned out after the manner of Gainsborough and Reynolds. Some of the painter's most famous images are here: Paul Revere, informal in shirtsleeves, holding a silver teapot; the preternaturally solid Mrs. Ezekiel Goldthwait, her fat hand resting proprietorially on a bowl of fruit; and the Colonial potentate Nicholas Boylston, resplendent in lavish silk robes. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt." Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ Black-and-white photographs by Hiroshi Sugimoto, chosen from three different series: "Seascapes," "Motion Pictures," and "Hall of Thirty-three Bays." Through Jan. 14. . . . ¶ "Goya in the Metropolitan Museum of Art." Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ "Howard Hodgkin: Paintings 1975-1995." Through Jan. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)



Rube Goldberg, at Salander-O'Reilly.

RICHARD MERKIN

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Piet Mondrian: 1872-1944," a hundred and sixty paintings and drawings, and a re-creation of the artist's last studio. Through Jan. 23. . . . ¶ "Alfred Stieglitz at Lake George," a large trove of photographs from the twenties and thirties, many never before exhibited, taken at Stieglitz's upstate retreat. Through Jan. 2. . . . ¶ A small show of works from the seventies to the present by the French Conceptualist Annette Messager, who combines photographed, painted, and drawn images with found and constructed objects and text. Through Jan. 16. . . . ¶ Uta Barth,

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Joseph Bartscherer, Ulrich Görlich, and Eric Rondepierre have contributed new photographs and site-specific installations to "New Photography 11." Through Jan. 9. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Claes Oldenburg: An Anthology." Through Jan. 21. . . . ¶ "Joel-Peter Witkin," a mid-career retrospective of the photographer's astonishing and horrifying œuvre. Through Jan. 14. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Beat Culture and the New America: 1950-1965," a loving, ambitious tribute to the angry young men of the era that nevertheless doesn't really solve the perennial problem of literature-based exhibitions: books in glass cases have little to say to people who haven't read them. Yet there are lively paintings—doodles, really—by Kerouac and Burroughs and a family-snapshot album of the movement by Ginsberg. Anyone who was a teen-ager during those years will feel the numinous pull of the manuscript of "Howl" and of the Teletype-paper roll on which Kerouac typed "On the Road." Through Feb. 4. . . . ¶ "Robert Frank: Moving Out," a large retrospective of the photographer's career. Through Feb. 11. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Aerial photographs of pre-Columbian ruins and other sites in Peru, by Marilyn Bridges. Through Feb. 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St.—"Paris Modern: The Swedish Ballet 1920-25." The Ballets Suédois was an avant-garde hothouse nourished on the contributions of de Chirico, Picabia, Cocteau, Léger, Cole Porter, René Clair, and many others. The two hundred and fifty objects here—drawings, costume and set designs, stage models, photographs, and two full-size backdrops—admirably document the company's short, fiery history. Through Jan. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8, and Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"The Butterfly and the Bat: Whistler and Montesquiou." At the center of this show's universe is James McNeill Whistler's 1892 portrait "Arrangement in Black and Gold: Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac." Many items on loan—paintings, drawings, photographs, decorative art, and more—illuminate the complex relationship between the American expatriate artist and the French poet, critic, and topflight dandy. Through Jan. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Norwegian Folk Art: The Migration of a Tradition" features Viking-style tankards, massive porringers, ornate dowry trunks, elaborate ceremonial coverlets, and examples of rosemaling (vivid floral painting on wood). Through Jan. 7. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Edvard Munch and Harald Sohlberg: Landscapes of the Mind." A conspectus of the work of two turn-of-the-century Norwegian painters. Munch is represented by many of his finest canvases, including the mesmerizing "Madonna," and "Vampire," a lamp-lit scene of a couple kissing which virtually tingles with horror. "The Scream" is here, too, in lithograph form. Sohlberg's vision was more uplifting than harrowing; he specialized in mountain landscapes at dusk (when the arctic horizon was ablaze) and afterward. Through Jan. 14. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11:30 to 5:30; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Kent Bellows / Robert Schwartz—Hyperrealist oil paintings (including a hair-perfect self-portrait) and, even more impressive, fantastically well-finished graphite drawings—e.g., a nude standing in front of a peeling plaster wall, which is positively Ingresque. / Absurdist scenes of modern people shoved into situations suggestive of early Renaissance illuminated manuscripts and Dutch Baroque genre painting, executed with the precision of a Persian miniaturist. In "A Monkey Orchestra," a gym boy in skivvies and work boots has been scooped off Eighth Avenue and deposited in an agricultural landscape worthy of a French princess's book of hours. The message is often blurry, but the technique is dazzling. Through Dec. 16. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Rube Goldberg (1883-1970) / **Larry Poons**—Sublime nuttiness by the oddball genius whose proposals for wacky inventions filled his comic strips (among them "Boob McNutt" and "Professor Lucifer Gorgonzola Butts") for sixty years. Thirty-six original strips are included, along with several late sculptures. / New color-field paintings. Both shows through Dec. 30. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Darragh Park—Large, lyrical watercolors that recall the pastel idealism of such American painters as Robert and Sonia Delaunay and the prismatic whorls of the Synchronists. Best are the Manhattan nocturnes, a series of ecstatic visions of the Empire State Building that evoke the Emerald City and Gotham City; they verge on sentimentality, but there is enough urban grit to rescue them. Through Dec. 16. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

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"Haute Culture: Images of Couture"—This complement to "Haute Couture" at the Met features a selection of drawings and photographs that capture the history of high fashion. The artists include Erté, Horst, Beaton, Penn, Avedon, Newton, Weber, and Snowdon. Through Dec. 22. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

DC Moore Gallery—The gallery's inaugural exhibition brings together a motley group of artists who must have had trouble thinking up what to say to each other at the opening—yet there's some fine work. Debra Bermingham's gently focussed painting of a Victorian sideboard is gently tilted, as though Grandma's parlor has been put out to sea, and dizzying. Jack Levine spoofs his own milieu with a claque of gray-haired art-world types, entitled "The Avant Garde." Yvonne Jacquette's glittering aerial view of a city at night with an airplane wing slicing through is a contemporary echo of Reginald Marsh's charming, dowdy Manhattan skyline with smoking tugboats passing by. Through Dec. 30. (724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"The Boy Just Stood There," by Craig Barber, at Rice.

Short List—**JAMES BARSNESS,** Adams, 50 W. 57th St. Through Jan. 4. . . . **ST. CLAIR CEMIN,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through Jan. 6. . . . **LEE KRASNER,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays; through Jan. 27. . . . **JULES OLITSKY** and **HANS HOFMANN,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through Jan. 6 and Jan. 20, respectively. . . . **DOUG SAFRANEK,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. Through Dec. 23. . . . **ANTONI TÀPIES,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. Through Jan. 13. . . . **ROBERT RAHWAY ZAKANITCH,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. Through Dec. 23.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Francesco Clemente—A selection of oil paintings and works on paper from the eighties, by the leading Italian exponent of neo-expressionism. The images are unfailingly lovely, regardless of their outré subject matter (polymorphous sexuality, decapitation, vomiting, etc.). Through Jan. 27. (Blum, 99 Wooster St.)

Richard Prince—The master of the postmodernist put-on tries his hand at real art—and it suits him. In this group of large paintings, Prince juxtaposes his trademark bad jokes with cell-like enclosures of computer-generated doodles and splashy Abstract Expressionist brushstrokes that overlap and tumble to the corners of the canvas like sloppy dominoes. Imagine Cy Twombly playing Grossinger's. Through Dec. 22. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Gerhard Richter—A near-retrospective of paintings emphasizing blurry gray images based on photographs from the early sixties, by a great German artist who defies categorization. In works such as "Administrative Building" (an utterly uninflected portrait of a squat government pile) and in paintings that depict groups of provocatively posed nude adolescent girls, he comes as close as any artist ever has to pure ambiguity: does he like the building or hate it? are the girls supposed to be sexy? We'll never know. An important exhibition. Through Jan. 13. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. . . . ¶ Richter's comprehensive "Atlas" is at Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Christian Schumann / Sylvie Fleury—Paintings in which a young artist deftly re-creates a plethora of comic-book, graffiti, and advertising styles. Some are brightly hued, after the manner of album-cover graphics; others are blanched, with the artist's innumerable little sketches drifting through beige planes like homeless Miró biomorphs. / Returning to an image from a previous show, an artist giddily obsessed with the shifting currents of fashion has crafted three soft-sculpture rockets (each titled "First Spaceship on Venus") after the manner of Oldenburg—two in girlie-pink fabric, one in glittery gold lamé. Through Dec. 23. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

"Animals in Ornament"—Highly detailed watercolors of architectural and garden ornaments, by Andrew Zega and Bernd H. Dams. Through Dec. 20. (Folly, 13 White St.)

Short List—**MARINA ABRAMOVIC,** Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. Through Jan. 13. . . . **BETH B,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway. Through Dec. 22. . . . **JO BAER,** Cooper, 155 Wooster St. Through Jan. 13. . . . **DANIEL BUREN,** Weber, 142 Greene St. Through Dec. 23. . . . **JEANNETTE CHRISTENSEN,** Room, 25 Thompson St. Through Dec. 23. . . . **CHUCK CLOSE,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. Through Jan. 6. . . . **MOIRA DRYER** and **DAVID IRELAND,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. Through Dec. 23. . . . **TOMAS ESSON,** Baghoomian, 163 Mercer St. Through Dec. 30. . . . **MALCOLM MORLEY,** Klein, 40 Wooster St. Through Jan. 6. . . . **TOM SACHS,** Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6. . . . **FRED WILSON,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. Through Jan. 6.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—Dec. 15: Letters and documents relating to American history, from the *Forbes* magazine collection. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.) . . . ¶ At Christie's East: You can get an Oscar the easy way when the 1941 Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay goes to the highest bidder in an auction of movie memorabilia. (Hint: "Rosebud.") (219 E. 67th St. Dec. 18.)

Sotheby's—Dec. 16: Mementos from the worlds of film and TV (including Barbara Eden's bottle from the 1965 première season of "I Dream of Jeannie") and rock and roll (Jim Morrison's leather pants, circa 1968.) . . . ¶ Dec. 18: Animation art, from Disney to Gumby. . . . ¶ Dec. 19-20: Twelve hundred objets d'art owned by the late socialite Jerome Zipkin form the core of an arcade auction. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

William Doyle—Leaden Prussian Hussars will march across the auction block during a sale of military miniatures and antique toys. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. Dec. 14 at 10 A.M.)

Swann Galleries—Autographed detective novels loom prominently in an auction of first editions, signed and inscribed copies, and manuscripts. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Dec. 14 at 10:30 A.M.)

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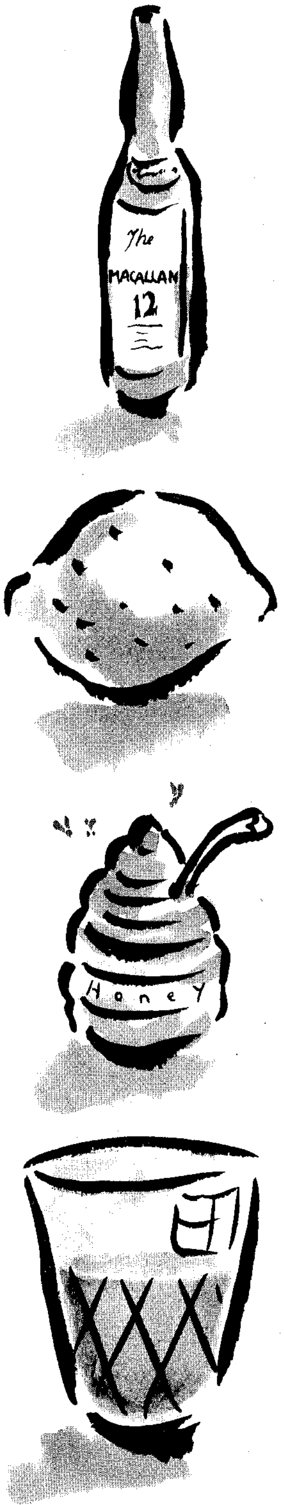

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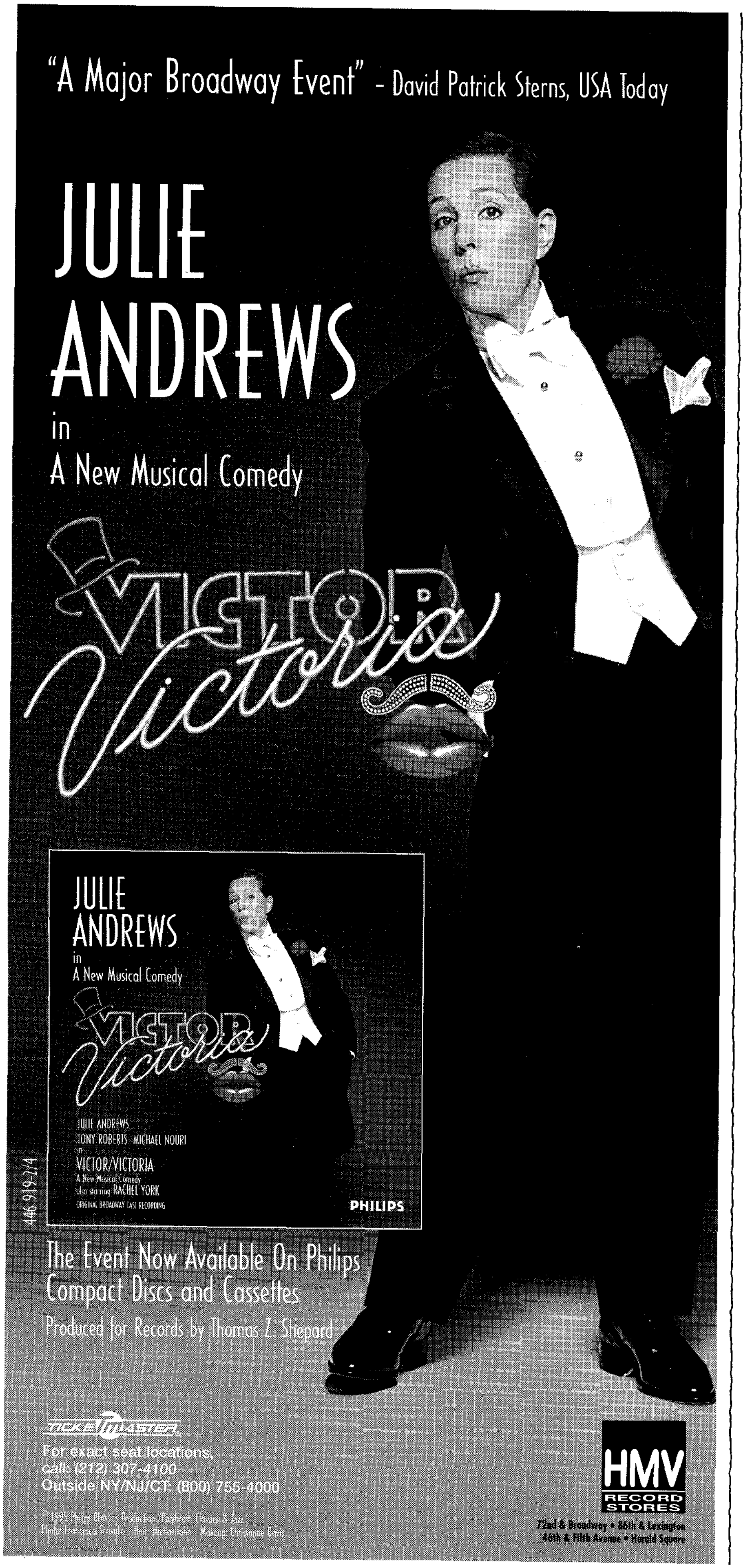
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PHOTOGRAPHY

Craig Barber / Marshall—The photographer, who fought in Vietnam, recently revisited that country, and the results are platinum-print landscapes presented in wide-format diptychs. While Barber was often surrounded by people, the pictures appear eerily unpopulated, since his pinhole-camera exposure times were upward of thirty minutes. / Deep Vandyke-brown photographs of collaged elements meant to evoke Africa: tribal fabrics, grass huts, ceremonial masks. Through Dec. 30. (Rice, 325 W. 11th St. Open Thursdays through Saturdays, 1 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 7.)

John Coplans—"Self Portrait: Frieze," a series of oversized nude torsos (the artist, as always) in groups of two, three, and four, which runs in a loose band around the gallery walls. Through Jan. 13. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Andreas Feininger—Urban and industrial landscapes, closeups of seashells and plants, and portraits, by the former *Life* photographer, who is eighty-nine this year. Through Jan. 6. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St.)

"Frida Unmasked"—Portraits of the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, taken by family members, close friends, and lovers, including Lola and Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Nickolas Muray, and Diego Rivera. Through Jan. 13. (Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St.)

"The Hungarian Circle: 1916-1940"—A two-gallery show of vintage photographs and collages by trailblazers (Kertész, Brassaï, Moholy-Nagy, Munkacsi, Capa) and more obscure artists (Pal Angelo, Imre Kinszki, Karoly Escher, Josef Pesci). Through Dec. 30. (Greenberg and Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.)

"Shooting the Moon"—Lunar photography from 1850 to 1994, including glass plates, stereographs, daguerreotypes, and NASA images. Through Jan. 13. (Saul, 560 Broadway.)

"Kissing"—More than seventy photographs of wondrous osculation, by such artists as Julia Margaret Cameron, André Kertész, George Hurrell, Ernst Haas, Nan Goldin, Danny Lyon, and Weegee. Through Jan. 6. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

"New York Stories"—Less-familiar views of our metropolis, from the forties through the seventies, by Fritz Neugass, Fred Stein, Marvin Newman, David Attie, Simpson Kalisher, and Donald Blumberg. Through Jan. 13. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Feeling the Spirit: Searching the World for the People of Africa," twenty years of photographs by *Times* staff photographer Chester Higgins, Jr. Through Jan. 7. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Eve Arnold: In Retrospect," black-and-white and color images from the photojournalist's forty-year career: politicians, diplomats, movie stars, religious leaders, artists, and musicians. Through Feb. 11. . . . ¶ "Country Beside Itself," Lars Tunbjörk's colorful, idiosyncratic exploration of Sweden's changing commercial and leisure pursuits. Through Feb. 11. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**KAY SIMMON BLUMBERG**, Borden, 560 Broadway. Through Dec. 21. . . . **BEVERLY BROWN**, Photonica, 141 Fifth Ave., at 21st St. Closed Saturdays; through Jan. 5. . . . **RALSTON CRAWFORD** and **RON JUDE**, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through Dec. 30. . . . **ELLIOTT ERWITT**, Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Through Jan. 6. . . . **OSAMU KANEMURA**, Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St. Through Jan. 13. . . . **O. WINSTON LINK**, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through Dec. 16. . . . **EL LISSITZKY**, Schickler, 52 E. 76th St. Through Jan. 13. . . . **STEPHEN SHORE**, Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Through Jan. 6. . . . **GERALD SLOTA**, Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. Through Jan. 20.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the American Museum of Natural History.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949.)

HOLIDAY MUSIC

Carols and Choruses—Dec. 14 at 8: The Virgin Consort, under Kyler Brown, performs music by Victoria, Pärt, Poulenc, and others. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939.) . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 8: Bruce G. McInnes directs the Grace Church Choral Society and Orchestra in magnificats by Bach and John Rutter. (Broadway at 10th St. 533-4653.) . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 8: Discantus, a vocal chamber ensemble, performs the "Missa de Beata Virgine" and several motets by Josquin Desprez, among other works. (Church of the Resurrection, 115 E. 74th St. Admission by contribution.) . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 7: Dino Anagnost leads the Metropolitan Singers/The Greek Choral Society and the Little Orchestra Society in seasonal classics, plus the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. (Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, 319 E. 74th St. For information about tickets, call 704-2100.) . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 8: The Canby Singers present a new work by Benedict Weisser, as well as music from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. (St. John's Church, 218 W. 11th St., at Waverly Pl. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 4: Liturgical works by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, and Stravinsky, sung by the Russian Chamber Chorus of New York. (Good Shepherd Church, 240 E. 31st St. For information about tickets, call 928-1402.) . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 4 and 6:30: Carolling by candlelight, with audience participation. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. For information, call 870-6784.) . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 7: The Central City Chorus, directed by Charles Pilling, performs Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols" and "St. Nicolas," as well as Finzi's "In Terra Pax." (Central Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 64th St. 838-0808.) . . . ¶ Dec. 19 at 8: The St. Bartholomew's Choir, the American Boychoir, and the Gabrieli Brass present Baroque Christmas music and twentieth-century English arrangements of carols. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 248.)

Handel's "Messiah"—Dec. 14 at 7:30: Gerre Hancock directs the St. Thomas Choir of Men and Boys, with the Concert Royal period-instrument orchestra. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013.) . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 8: The Collegiate Chorale and Orchestra of St. Luke's are joined by soprano Joan Rodgers, countertenor David Daniels, tenor Vinson Cole, and bass-baritone John Cheek. Robert Bass directs. (Carnegie Hall.) . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 8: Marin Alsop leads the Concordia Orchestra's annual "Too Hot to Handel," a gospel-, jazz-, and rock-inflected reinterpretation of the oratorio. (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 8 and Dec. 17 at 2: The Masterwork Chorus, directed by David Briskin. (Carnegie Hall.) . . . ¶ Dec. 15 at 8: The National Chorale. (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 3: The Choir and Orchestra of Trinity Church, directed by Owen Burdick. (Broadway at Wall St. 602-0873. . . . NOTE: On Dec. 18 at 1, the performers will repeat the Christmas portion.) . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 8: Lyndon Woodside leads the Oratorio Society of New York. (Carnegie Hall.) . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 8: An audience sing-along sponsored by the National Choral Council. (Avery Fisher Hall.)

Anonymous 4—The fab four of medieval music perform the early English carols and motets *that figure on their best-selling recording* "On Yoolis Night." (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. 678-5432. Dec. 15 at 8.)

Boston Camerata—Presenting seasonal chants and songs from the Middle Ages. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Dec. 15 at 8.)

Orchestra of St. Luke's—Charles Mackerras leads Berlioz's "sacred trilogy," "L'Enfance du Christ," with mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt, tenor John Aler, baritone William Sharp, bass-baritone John Cheek, and the Canticum Novum Festival Singers. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 16 at 8.)

Kent Tritle—The organist's program includes two "Noël"'s by Louis-Claude Daquin and seasonally apt chorale preludes by Bach; he'll be joined by a string ensemble for a concerto by Handel and works by Mozart and Corelli. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Dec. 17 at 4.)

Pomerium and the Baltimore Consort—Two ways to skin the early-music cat. Pomerium hews to traditional musicological rectitude; the Baltimore Consort ranges freely across the border between folk and art traditions. They should balance each other nicely in this program of Renaissance Christmas music. (Medieval Sculpture Hall, Metropolitan Museum. Dec. 17 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

LISTENING BOOTH

Stocking Stuffers—Chanticleer, a twelve-man vocal ensemble founded in 1978, has developed into a consummate close-harmony group. Its latest release, SING WE CHRISTMAS (Teldec), spans five centuries of repertoire, culminating in Christmas spirituals arranged by music director Joseph Jennings to spotlight the singers' dazzling virtuosity. IN DULCI JUBILO (ASV), with the London Oriana Choir, includes a fine performance of Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols," with women improving on the solo renditions usually supplied by boy sopranos. In A CHRISTMAS LEGEND: "RESONET IN LAUDIBUS" (Sony Classical Vivarte), the Niederaltaicher Scholaren offer no fewer than ten Renaissance and Baroque settings of the title tune. The Choir of Winchester Cathedral and Bournemouth Symphony's CHRISTMAS FANTASY (London) will be a hit with those who like their harmonizations Britannic and their trebles young and male. In a strictly instrumental vein, Yuri Temirkanov leads the Royal Philharmonic in A NUTCRACKER CHRISTMAS (BMG Classics), tempering the ballet's cuteness and working in wintry movements from other Tchaikovsky scores. The twenty-six brass players of the Ludwig Güttler Blechbläserensemble raise the roof with Baroque grandiosity in BLÄSERMUSIK ZUR WEIHNACHT (Berlin Classics). And on EIN SYLVERSTERKONZERT (Berlin Classics, remastered from 1973), Rudolf Kempe and the Staatskapelle Dresden waltz and polka their way through light classics in a traditional New Year's celebration.

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE, with Joan Rodgers, Larissa Rudakova, Deon van der Walt, Mark Oswald, and Hans Sotin; conducted by Peter Schneider. (Dec. 13, Dec. 16, and Dec. 19, all at 8.) . . . UN BALLO IN MASCHERA, with Deborah Voigt, Elizabeth Norberg-Schulz, Dolora Zajick, Francisco Araiza, and Leo Nucci; Mark Elder. (Dec. 14 at 8.) . . . LA BOHÈME, with Hei-Kyung Hong, Diana Soviero, Marcello Giordani, and Dwayne Croft; Carlo Rizzi. (Dec. 15 and Dec. 18 at 8.) . . . DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG, with Karita Mattila, Birgitta Svendén, Ben Heppner, Lars Magnusson, Bernd Weikl, Hermann Prey, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; James Levine.

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(Dec. 16 at noon.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

Yale Opera—Presenting a semi-staged production of Berlioz's "Béatrice et Benédict," the composer's 1862 opéra comique, derived from Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing"; with Lawrence Leighton Smith conducting the Yale Philharmonia and Camerata. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 13 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Leonard Slatkin conducts Gunther Schuller's "Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee" and Hindemith's "Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber"; soprano Kathleen Battle is featured in arias from Handel's "Alcina" and in André Previn's song cycle "Honey and Rue." (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 14 and Dec. 16 at 8 and Dec. 19 at 7:30.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Riccardo Chailly conducts Ravel's "Alborado del Gracioso" and G-Major Piano Concerto (with Jean-Yves Thibaudet), as well as Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 13 at 8.)

Riverside Choral Society—Performing Vivaldi's "Ostro Picta" and Magnificat, Schubert's G-Major Mass, and Lou Harrison's "Mass to St. Anthony"; directed by Patrick Gardner. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. 924-0442. Dec. 15 at 8.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—Performing Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos No. 4 and No. 5. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Dec. 17 at noon.)

Cosmopolitan Symphony Orchestra—Performing Lowell Liebermann's "Revelry," Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola (featuring Eric Grossman and Xiao Dong-Wang), and Brahms's Symphony No. 4. Keri-Lynn Wilson conducts. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 17 at 2. . . . **NOTE:** Messrs. Grossman and Xiao will present a pre-concert recital, beginning at 1.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard conducts music by Saint-Saëns, much of it little known: "Lola" (a solo cantata), "Une Nuit" (an orchestral barcarolle), ballet music from the opera "Étienne Marcel," the Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Ik-Hwan Bae), and the Piano Concerto No. 4 (with Jerome Lowenthal). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Dec. 18 at 2 and 7 and Dec. 19 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

RECITALS

Jerome Lowenthal—The pianist offers three works of vast conception: Liszt's "Fantasie and Fugue on B-A-C-H" (the composer's transcription of his better known organ composition), Rochberg's "Partita Variations," and Beethoven's Sonata in B-Flat Major (Op. 106, the "Hammerklavier"). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Dec. 13 at 8.)

Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio—The ensemble offers piano trios by Beethoven, Shostakovich, and Mendelssohn. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 13 at 8.)

Bargemusic—French hornist Erik Ruske and the sisters Kerry and Anne-Marie McDermott (violinist and pianist) perform a concert that includes Harbison's "Twilight Music" and Brahms's Horn Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Dec. 14 at 7:30 and Dec. 17 at 4.)

Musicians from Marlboro—Performing Mozart's Oboe Quartet, Brahms's A-Major Piano Quartet, and Dvořák's A-Major String Sextet. (Metropolitan Museum. Dec. 14 at 8.)

Festival Chamber Music Society—Violinist Theodore Arm, flutist Eugenia Zukerman, cellist Ruth Sommers, and pianist Yuri Funahashi join in various configurations for trios by Beethoven, Pierné, and Chausson. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8060. Dec. 14 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—The ensemble continues its season-long salute to the music of Johann Nepomuk Hummel by playing his F-Major Trio (Op. 22), in addition to trios by Schubert (in E-Flat Major) and Bruce Adolphe (his Second). (Metropolitan Museum. Dec. 15-16 at 8.)

DUPUY-BERBERIAN

The Big Apple Circus, at Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park.

DUPUY-BERBERIAN

Beethoven's Birthday—Ludwig hits the two-and-a-quarter-century mark on Dec. 16. The following day, Joel Krosnick and Gilbert Kalish will salute the composer in their annual traversal of his five sonatas and three sets of variations for cello and piano, which they distribute between two recitals on a single day. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Dec. 17 at 3 and 7:30. One ticket provides entrée to both recitals.)

Škampa String Quartet—The Czech foursome plays quartets by Haydn, Janáček (his Second), and Beethoven (in F Minor, Op. 95). (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. Dec. 17 at 2. . . . ¶ Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. Dec. 18 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Performing all six of Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 17 at 5 and Dec. 19 at 7:30.)

Absolute Ensemble—Presenting music by the contemporary Russian composer Alexander Zhurbin, including the premières of his "Music for Piano and Strings" and Symphony No. 3. (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 13 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

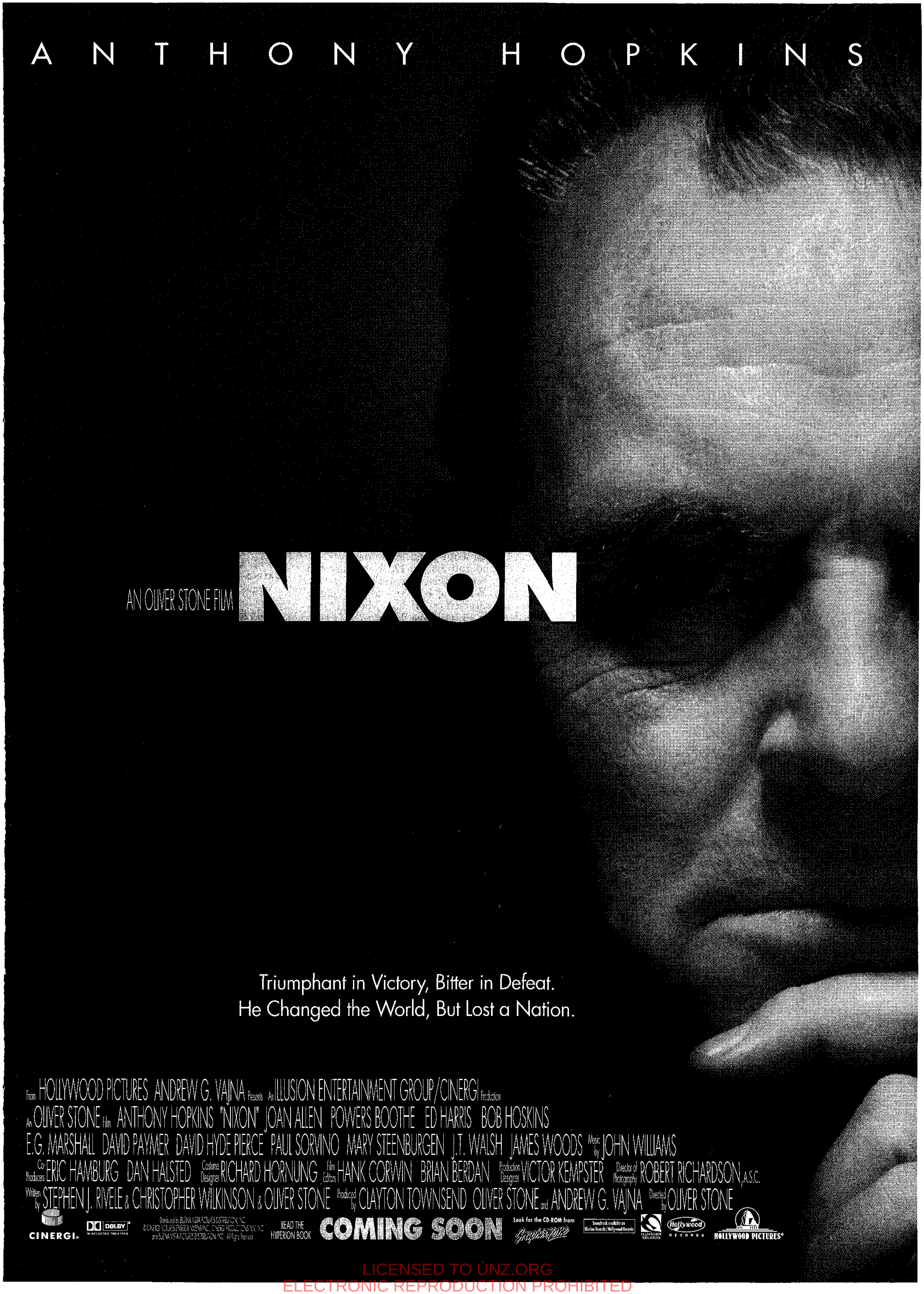
Ring Cycle—This year's Big Apple Circus spectacular, set during the roaring twenties, is packed with clowns, flappers, thundering steeds, glowing hula hoops, a jazz combo, trapeze artists in black tie and top hats—who knew that one ring could hold so much? (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. 721-6500. Through Jan. 7.)

Gravity and Light—Vincent Desiderio (who will show slides and chat about his work on Thursday at the Brooklyn Museum) paints luminous and unsettling pictures; his recent portraits of his son, Sammy, who suffered a stroke after brain surgery and now must breathe through a tube, bring the vastness and technical control of a Delacroix or a Géricault to scenes of everyday intimacy—mother, father, and child asleep in the same bed; Sammy and his grandfather napping on a couch. In conversation, the painter betrays an edgy articulateness as he documents his allusions to modernist pictorial strategies in ways that seem oddly cerebral given the emotional force of his work: "You know, a catastrophic event like that becomes, for a while—probably for a long while—like the insertion of a strong gravitational field in a space that was previously free-flowing. Or seemingly free-flowing." (Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. Dec. 14 at noon. No charge beyond museum admission.)

Golden Boy—The Clifford Odets play closes on Saturday. On Friday, the other Golden Boy, lightweight champion Oscar de la Hoya (who got the moniker by being the only American boxer to win a gold medal in the 1992 Olympics) defends his title against (Jesse) James Leija in Madison Square Garden. De la Hoya, a heavy puncher (all but two of his nineteen wins have been by knockout) with intuitive combinations (he is a third-generation de la Hoya boxer), is something of a godsend to the perpetually shady sport; not only did he dedicate his gold medal to his mother, he is also soft-spoken, boyish, and not managed by Don King. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. Dec. 15 at 9:30.)

Readings—Dec. 14 at 7: Novelists Paul Auster and Peter Carey read from their work. (D'Agostino Hall, New York University, 108 W. 3rd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 17 at 3: Poet John Keene reads from "Annotations," a collection about his childhood in St. Louis. (Brooklyn Moon Café, 745 Fulton St., at South Portland St., Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Dec. 13 at 6:30: Photographer Michael Yamashita shows slides of his expedition down the Mekong River, from its headwaters, in Tibet, through China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia to its delta, in Vietnam. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742.) . . . ¶ Dec. 16 at 1: Historian Mark Ferris reads diary accounts of the Great Fire of December 16, 1835, when an all-volunteer fire department battled blazes in twenty downtown New York blocks with water from neighborhood cisterns. (New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. No charge beyond museum admission.)



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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

The City of Lost Children—A dark fantasy written and directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro (“Delicatessen”), in which a mad scientist (Daniel Emilfork) kidnaps children in order to steal their dreams. With Ron Perlman. In French. Opening December 15. (Angelika Film Center and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Cry, the Beloved Country—James Earl Jones and Richard Harris star in Ronald Harwood's adaptation of Alan Paton's 1948 novel, which centers on two bereaved fathers, one black and one white, in South Africa. Darrell James Roodt is the director. Opening December 15. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Heat—Al Pacino and Robert De Niro play cop and robber, respectively, in a thriller set in Los Angeles. With Val Kilmer and Jon Voight. Written and directed by Michael Mann. Opening December 15. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, and Criterion Center.)

In the Name of the Emperor—The Japanese atrocities in Nanjing in 1937 are the subject of this documentary, directed by Christine Choy and Nancy Tong. Showing with a second documentary, “Betrayal,” about Sascha Anderson, an East German dissident who turned out to be an informer for the secret police; narrated by John Hurt and directed by Fredrik von Krusenstjerna. December 13-19. (Film Forum.)

Jumanji—A fantasy about a board game that holds its players captive, starring Robin Williams, Kirsten Dunst, and Bradley Pierce. Directed by Joe Johnston. From Chris Van Allsburg's 1981 children's book. Opening December 15. (Village Theatre VII, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Othello—Writer-director Oliver Parker's film adaptation, with Laurence Fishburne, Kenneth Branagh, and Irene Jacob. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening December 14. (Paris.)

Sabrina—Sydney Pollack directs Harrison Ford and Julia Ormond in a remake of Billy Wilder's 1954 romantic comedy, about a business magnate who falls in love with his chauffeur's daughter. Written by Barbara Benedek and David Rayfiel. Opening December 15. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Tower East, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Astor Plaza.)

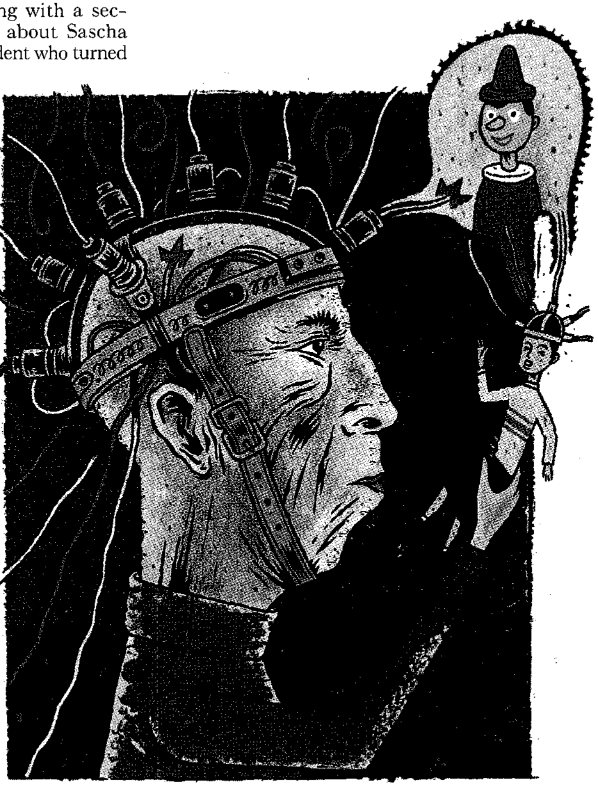
Sense and Sensibility—Ang Lee is the director and Emma Thompson the screenwriter and star of this version of Jane Austen's novel, in which Alan Rickman, Kate Winslet, and Hugh Grant also appear. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening December 13. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Baronet, and Lincoln Square.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 30.)

The American President—In Rob Reiner's romantic comedy, the Chief Executive (Michael Douglas) is a widower—a lonely guy in the White House. The script, by Aaron Sorkin, wastes no time setting him up with a nice girl (Annette Bening), who is lobbying him for tougher environmental laws. This dopey premise creates enough crises to keep the lovers from achieving their destined bliss until an hour and fifty minutes has passed; but if contrivance this monumental is what it takes to put over an “old-fashioned” romantic comedy these days, the genre is in big trouble. The picture benefits from hilarious bits by some of the supporting players—notably David Paymer, Richard Dreyfuss, and Michael J. Fox. It's a shame that the movie whose coattails these wonderful actors are attached to is such an empty suit.—T.R. (11/20/95) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th St. East, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Casino—Martin Scorsese's movie about Las Vegas in the seventies and early eighties clocks in at close to three hours, and the epic running time is absurdly disproportionate to the stature of the main characters: a mob-connected casino manager (Robert De Niro); his wife (Sharon Stone), a former hustler; and a vicious gangster (Joe Pesci). These insectlike figures play out a petty drama of



Opening December 15, Daniel Emilfork in “The City of Lost Children.”

ALEXIOS TIOYAS

greed, jealousy, and depraved indifference to human life, while voice-over narrations try strenuously, and unsuccessfully, to persuade us that something weighty and tragic is going on. Individual sequences—mostly brief documentary-style passages—are lively and superbly edited, but none provides more than a momentary rush. The picture circles its empty center endlessly: around and around it goes, and where it stops nobody knows. Scorsese certainly hasn't forgotten how to make a movie; what he appears to have forgotten is why.—T.R. (12/4/95) (34th Street Showplace, Beekman, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, Lincoln Square, and Olympia.)

Father of the Bride Part II—It's possible to imagine updating the angry, fragile father that Spencer Tracy played in "Father's Little Dividend" (1951) with some poignance when we keep hearing about the trials of middle-aged white men in the nineteen-nineties. But this remake, in which Dad (Steve Martin) struggles to deal with the simultaneous pregnancies of Mom (Diane Keaton) and their happily married daughter (Kimberly Williams), is a bizarrely opulent yuppie consumption fantasy. Aside from Keaton, who is warm and subtly hilarious, the most compelling players are table settings, floral arrangements, and Dad's sleek black convertible. With Martin Short as a fey party consultant—a slapstick Martha Stewart. Written by Nancy Meyers and Charles Shyer; directed by Shyer.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

Georgia—The definition of "downer." Mare Winningham and Jennifer Jason Leigh star as a pair of sisters; one sings, the other doesn't, although both try to make a living from their voices. The two women start out as opposites and never really shift their ground. On the sidelines stand their respective husbands, Ted Levine and the touching Max Perlich, trying not to get drawn into the grouchy mood. Leigh displays her habitual skills but no longer seems to take any pleasure in them—her banshee wail turns every song into mild torture. The film has plenty of integrity and gallons of rain; it was directed by Ulu Grosbard, whose previous movies, such as "Straight Time," have hardly been bundles of fun, either.—A.L. (12/11/95) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

GoldenEye—Pierce Brosnan assumes the mantle of 007; Bond's boss, M (Judi Dench), accuses him of being a sexist dinosaur, while his latest love, Natalya (Izabella Scorupco), has to stroll along in a white bikini under a vulgar sunset. (Although much of the action unfolds among grubby Mafia types in post-Soviet St. Petersburg, Martin Campbell, the director, can't resist Caribbean hideaways.) Jeffrey Caine and Bruce Feirstein's script promises more fun than it delivers. Brosnan will never recapture the amused cool of the young Sean Connery, but he does overcome the handicap of looking like a humorless male model.—A.L. (11/27/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Mighty Aphrodite—Woody Allen stars in his latest picture as Lenny, a New York sportswriter bored by his wife (Helena Bonham Carter) and attracted to a hooker (Mira Sorvino) who happens to be the mother—though she doesn't know it—of his adopted son. The movie treads enjoyably over old ground, though rather than cruising along with the ease of Allen's best work it tends to hobble, and it closes in a flurry of undecided endings. Sorvino's comic momentum rescues it. She offers the alarming prospect of sexual comedy without neurosis; you don't see *that* too often in a Woody Allen film.—A.L. (10/30/95) (19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Money Train—Another "Lethal Weapon"-type buddy picture, filled with competitive energy and smart-ass retorts. This one stars Wesley

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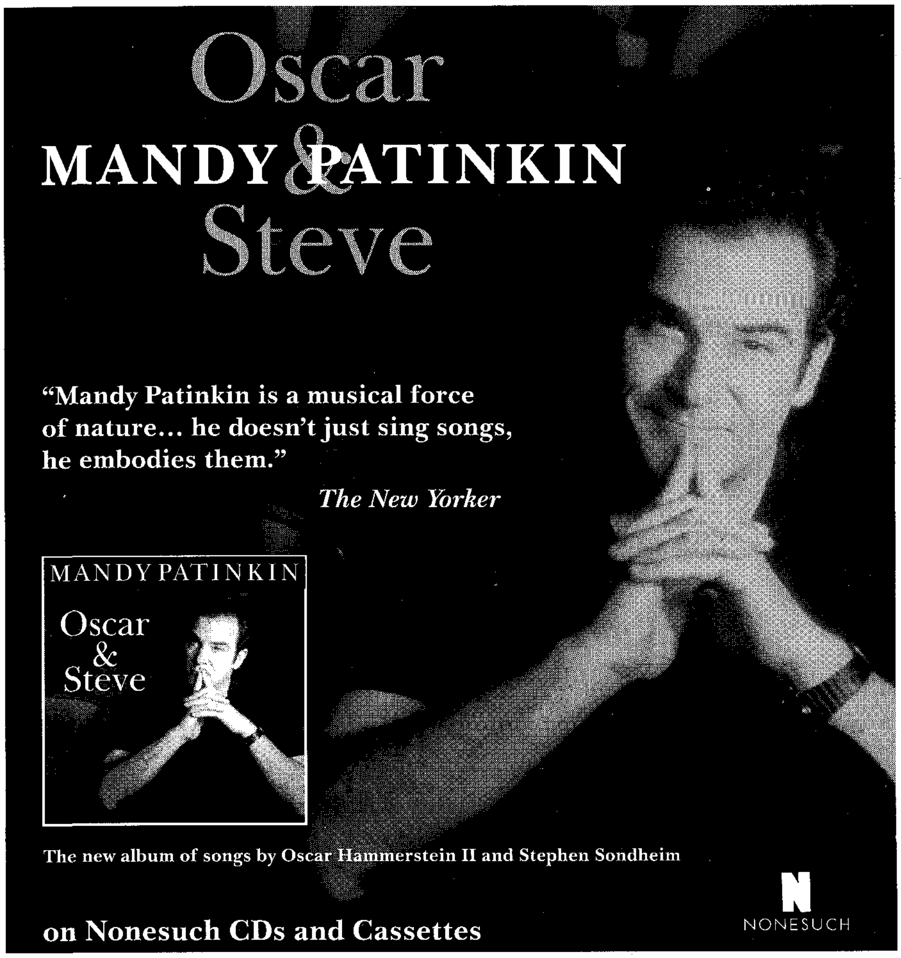

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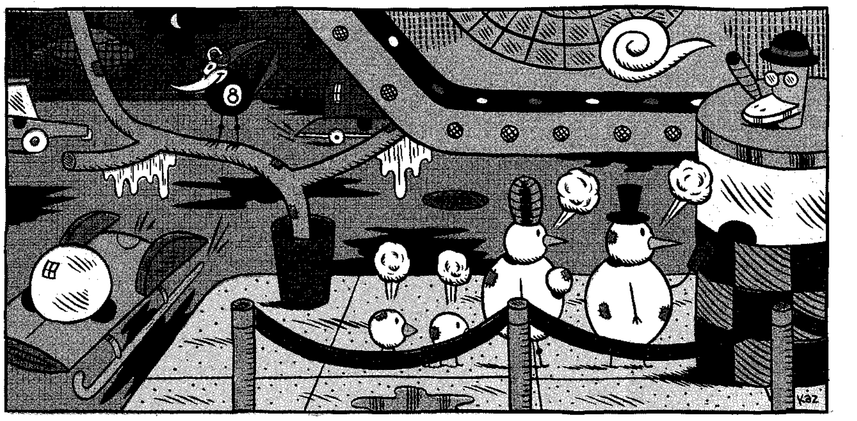
Snipes and Woody Harrelson, and the director, Joseph Ruben, has polished it to a high gloss. Ruben spends more time on token character development than this fluff requires, but when the movie gets to the sensational robbing of an armored New York City subway train, the audience may feel that it's a token well spent.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Nick of Time—John Badham directs this ninety-minute thriller in real time. The story—Johnny Depp must kill the Governor of California by film's end or his kidnapped daughter will die—is hyped at every turn by flashy moviemaking, and the suspense trickles away. Although the script seems modelled on Hitchcock's "The Man Who Knew Too Much," Badham has evidently forgotten how to invest a scene with the quiet menace that a good thriller needs. Christopher Walken, as the kidnapper, plays his usual bulging-eyed psycho with his usual aplomb. (Not many directors seem to realize that a little Walken goes a long way.) And Depp, a calm actor whose characters barely have a pulse, looks like he's in danger of suffering a heart attack from all the frenzied action long before the movie's preposterous finale.—B.D. (19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Astor Plaza; through Dec. 14.)



Toy Story—A team effort by the computer-animation company Pixar and Disney. The easy-to-follow screenplay, about the rivalry between two toys—cowboy Woody and spaceman Buzz Lightyear—should excite young children; teen-agers and parents can enjoy the brilliantly executed action sequences. The filmmakers have gotten around the coldness of so much computer animation by using the warm and friendly voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. Yes, it's a come-on for Disney products, but all their children's films are about marketing; at least this one—unlike "Pocahontas"—has some zip.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

White Man's Burden—The America we see here is ruled by a classy black élite, with a despairing white underclass way down below. Desmond Nakano wrote and directed this clever, speedy little thriller; some of his jokes—the all-black TV shows, the black doll craved by a white child—are sly and sharp, but the main plot could have come from anywhere, since it's obviously based more on class than on color: the poor, unemployed nobody (John Travolta) seeks revenge on the wealthy citizen (Harry Belafonte), only to find his plans spinning out of control. The two men make peace, yet they know that a happy ending is out of the question, and the unhappiness, when it comes, is like a blow to the heart. The brush of dramatic styles—Travolta's short fuse versus Belafonte's poise—is cool and convincing, and there's no mistaking Nakano's ambitions. If only they had stretched a little further.—A.L. (12/11/95) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Wild Bill—What's refreshing about Walter Hill's Western is that it tells the story of a larger-than-life frontier hero without stripping him of either his dignity or his vitality. After a virtuoso opening, in which Hill supplies a dizzying nonchronological montage of episodes from James Butler Hickok's career, the movie settles down to focus on the hero's final days. Jeff Bridges is brilliant as the legendary gunman; he and Hill create a complex portrait of an uncomplicated man—a man of action who suddenly feels himself ambushed by reflection, and even, occasionally, by regret. This is an elegiac Western that somehow manages to be as funny and rambunctious and exciting as the unselfconscious genre classics of yesteryear. The picture finds the comic truth in frontier myth, and does so not by challenging it but by the simpler, more elegant means of looking it straight in the eye. The splendid supporting cast includes Ellen Barkin (as Calamity Jane), John Hurt, James Gammon, David Arquette, Diane Lane, and Bruce Dern. Hill's screenplay is loosely based on Pete Dexter's novel "Deadwood" and Thomas Babe's play "Father and Son."—T.R. (12/4/95) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Manhattan Twin, Regency, and Embassy 4. . . . ¶ East 85th Street; through Dec. 14.)

ALSO PLAYING

ACE VENTURA: WHEN NATURE CALLS: Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . **ACROSS THE SEA OF TIME:** Lincoln Square. . . . **APOLLO 13** (reviewed in our issue of 7/10/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BABE** (9/4/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BLUE IN THE FACE** (10/23/95): Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **THE BROTHERS MC MULLEN:** Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **CARRINGTON** (11/27/95): Paris. . . . **CLUELESS:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE CONVENT:** Quad Cinema. . . . **COPYCAT** (11/13/95): Village East Cinemas, New York Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center. . . . **THE CROSSING GUARD:** Angelika Film Center and Gotham Cinema. . . . **DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS** (10/2/95): Movieland 8th Street Triplex. . . . **GET SHORTY** (10/23/95): Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center. . . . **HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS** (11/13/95): Tower East, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Embassy 2. . . . **HOW TO MAKE AN AMERICAN QUILT:** 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **IT TAKES TWO:** Village East Cinemas, New York Twin, East 85th Street, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square. . . . **THE KINGDOM:** Film Forum and Angelika 57. . . . **LEAVING LAS VEGAS** (11/6/95): Village East Cinemas, Plaza, and 62nd & Broadway. . . . **A MONTH BY THE LAKE:** Cinema 3. . . . **MORTAL KOMBAT:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MURIEL'S WEDDING:** Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **NOBODY LOVES ME:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **PERSUASION** (9/25/95): Eastside Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Square. . . . **PIGALLE:** Quad Cinema. . . . **THE POSTMAN:** Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gemini, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **POWDER:** Embassy 3. . . . **RECKLESS:** Village East Cinemas. . . . **SMOKE:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **UNZIPPED:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE USUAL SUSPECTS** (8/14/95): 68th St. Playhouse and Quad Cinema. . . . **WHEN NIGHT IS FALLING:** Angelika Film Center.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Plaza, 42 E. 58th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Baronet and Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini 1 and 2, Second Ave. at 64th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
Tower East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.

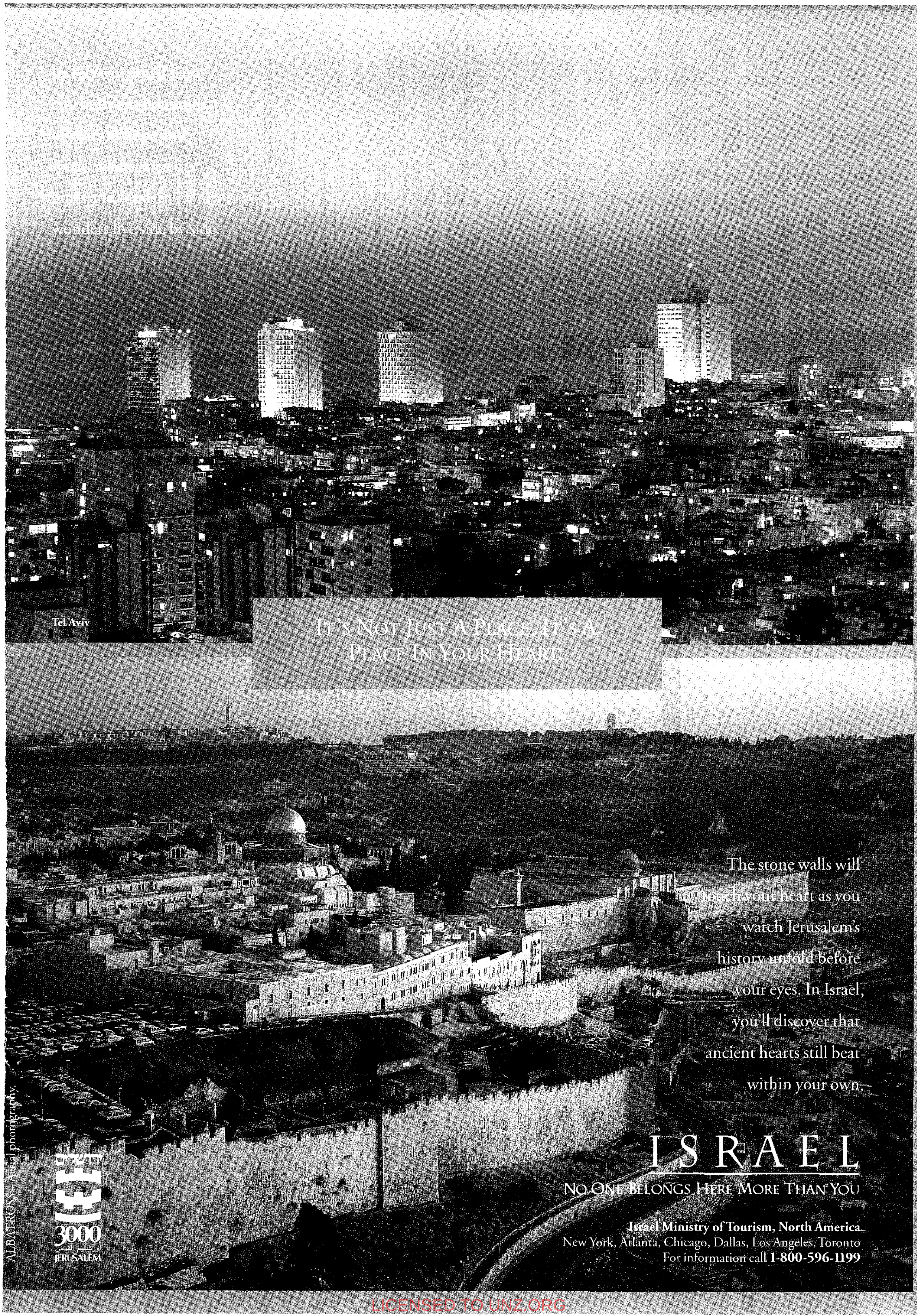
WEST SIDE

Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
Embassy 1, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.

KAZ



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REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

The Getting of Wisdom (1977)—A minor post-Victorian autobiographical novel about an Australian girl's coming-of-age, re-created for the screen in its own terms—or, rather, in what the re-creators think are its own terms. At thirteen, an impoverished girl (Susannah Fowle) from the back country who is highly precocious and a gifted musician comes to Melbourne, and she spends five years there at the Presbyterian Ladies College, a select school for the daughters of the wealthy, where the teachers sneer at her because her mother runs a post office in the bush, and the girls are harpies. She almost succumbs to snobbery, but she has her brains and her talent and her intrepid nature to see her through. This self-infatuated fantasy is presented in the guise of harsh realism, and the faithful, meticulous period re-creation makes it hard for us to connect with the heroine or with anything else. Directed by Bruce Beresford, whose attitude toward the material is cold and literal, as if we were in need of a muckraking exposé of the Victorian education of ladies.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Dec. 18.)

It's Love I'm After (1937)—A light farce in which Leslie Howard and Bette Davis play a shallow, vanity-ridden matinée idol and his hot-tempered leading lady, and relish every hammy, slapstick minute of it. They are surrounded by the millionaires (George Barbier), valets and butlers (Eric Blore, E. E. Clive), and silly heiresses (Olivia de Havilland) who were at one time as much of a convention in American comedy as the fops of Restoration theatre. Casey Robinson's script (from a story written for the screen by Maurice Hanline) is musty and Archie Mayo's direction is sluggish, but the movie is pleasantly bad. It begins with a burlesque of the tomb scene from "Romeo and Juliet" and proceeds like a somewhat deranged "Taming of the Shrew."—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 17.)

The Lady Eve (1941)—A frivolous masterpiece. Like "Bringing Up Baby," "The Lady Eve" is a mixture of visual and verbal slapstick, and of high artifice and pratfalls. Barbara Stanwyck keeps sticking out a sensational leg, and Henry Fonda keeps tripping over it. She's a cardsharp, and he's a millionaire scientist who knows more about snakes than about women; neither performer has ever been funnier. The film, based on a story by Monckton Hoffe, and with screenplay and direction by Preston Sturges, is full of classic moments and classic lines; it represents the dizzy high point of Sturges's comedy writing. With Charles Coburn, Eugene Pallette, William Demarest, and Eric Blore.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 15-16.)

Lonely Hearts (1982)—This movie is very casually strung together. It's an Australian variant of the comfy-cozy Ealing comedies of the fifties, but it doesn't have the precise construction—it moves from one small slapstick diversion to the next. As the timid, sexually repressed heroine, Wendy Hughes is lovely in the standard fine-actress-playing-dowdy-aging-virgin performance. As the piano tuner who courts her, Norman Kaye has a furtive, childlike prankishness, and that's what keeps the movie alive. The core idea is moist, but the film's humor is dry and sometimes darting and sneaky. Directed by Paul Cox, who wrote the script with John Clarke, the film has a cheerless look and dreary, crabbed cinematography. You have to settle for the flyspeck jokes, and the acting; it's all mildly satirical, mildly romantic, and mildly engaging. With Jonathan Hardy as the piano tuner's amiable, innocent brother-in-law and Jon Finlayson as the flamboyant director of an amateur theatrical group.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Dec. 19.)

Meet Me in St. Louis (1944)—As pretty and inviting as a candy sampler, with some bittersweet nuggets inside. The director, Vincente Minnelli, puts his sophisticated style and vibrant performers at the service of a simple Midwestern fable with the message "There's no place like home" (see "The Wizard of Oz"). The blooming Judy Garland ("I have too much bloom," she quips) and the feisty young Margaret O'Brien are the liveliest of Leon Ames's four daughters; under their influence, Ames, a lawyer, decides to stay in the cozy Gateway City of 1903 rather than accept a promotion to his firm's New York office. With the help of an able cast (Mary Astor as the mother, Harry Davenport as Grandpa, and Lucille Bremer and Joan Carroll as the other sisters), Minnelli brings out the romance of domesticity. Garland exudes a plangent longing and O'Brien a pipsqueak nerviness that cut through treacle. The four Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane tunes include "The Trolley Song" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."—M.S. (A Different Light Bookstore; Dec. 17.)

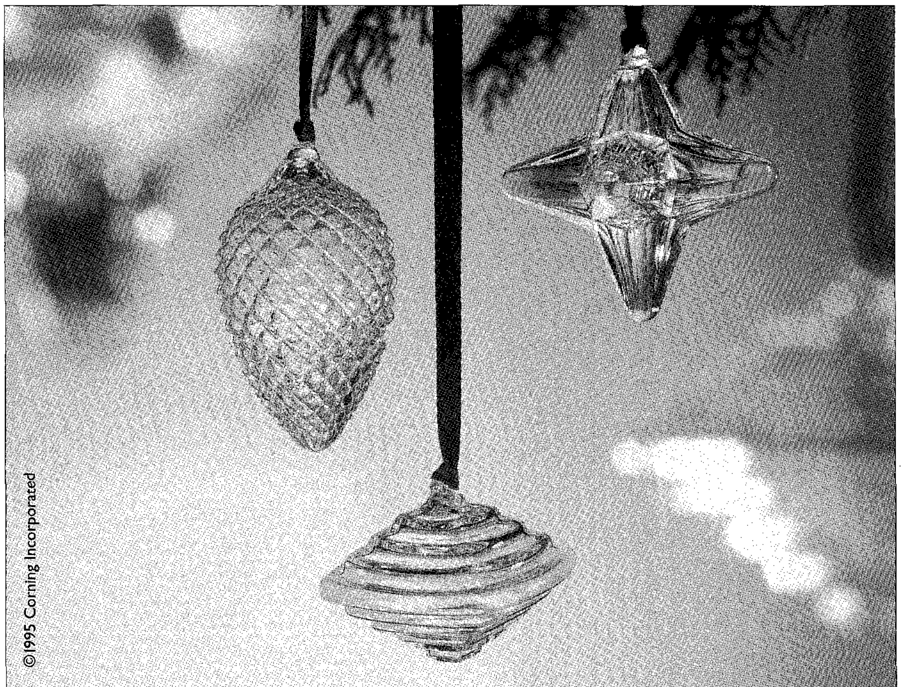
Mr. Hulot's Holiday (1953)—People are at their most desperate when they are working at enjoying themselves; it is Jacques Tati's peculiar comic triumph to have caught the ghastliness of a summer vacation at the beach. Fortunately, his technique is light and dry slapstick; the chronicle of human foibles and frustrations never sinks to the moist or the lovable. As director, co-author, and star, Tati is sparse, eccentric, quick. It is not until afterward—with the sweet, nostalgic music lingering—that these misadventures may take on a certain depth and poignancy. In French.—P.K. (Florence Gould Hall; Dec. 19.)

The Palm Beach Story (1942)—One of the giddiest and most chaotic of Preston Sturges's satiric orgies. The romantic problems of the leads (Joel McCrea and Claudette Colbert) get shoved aside by the secondary characters. Colbert, travelling by train, becomes involved with a bunch of drunken millionaires—members of the "Ale and Quail Club," on board with their hounds and guns—who stage an informal skeet shoot in the club car and demolish the glassware. Sturges's comic invention soars, but the picture is too wild to be sustained; still, it's a joy, despite the lulls of waggish humor. With Mary Astor, Rudy Vallee, and the Sturges stock company, including William Demarest, Franklin Pangborn, and Jimmy Conlin.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 15-16.)

Tequila Sunrise (1988)—Robert Towne, who wrote and directed, is soaked in the perfume of thirties and forties Hollywood romanticism. This is a lusciously silly movie; it has an amorous shine. Mel Gibson is a former drug dealer who longs for a decent, respectable life and is trying to succeed in the irrigation business. Kurt Russell is his friend who's the head of the narcotics squad in L.A. County. And Michelle Pfeiffer is the woman they both love. The crime plot often seems to be stalled, and by rational standards the stars' triangular shuffle is flimsy and stupid, but by romantic standards the whole thing is delectable.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Dec. 16.)

Theodora Goes Wild (1936)—Irene Dunne was better in comedy than in her smug, sacrificial roles, and in this movie and "The Awful Truth" she was at her best. She's too bright—she's almost shrill in her brightness—and she does something clever with her teeth that makes one want to slap her, but she has energy, and this comedy about a small-town girl who writes a best-seller and charms a city sophisticate (Melvyn Douglas) has a corny vitality that almost passes for wit. It was a hugely successful popular entertainment. Richard Boleslawski directed, from Sidney Buchman's screenplay.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 13-14.)

The Wizard of Oz (1939)—The most animated of live-action movies, M-G-M's adaptation



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of L. Frank Baum's first Oz book ranks with Disney's "Pinocchio" as the best kids' fare Old Hollywood brought forth. The filmmakers conjured a fantasy at once out of this *world and down to earth. The ensemble* mastered a broad masquerade style—the peak practitioners are Bert Lahr, whose Cowardly Lion knows only the roar of the greasepaint, and Ray Bolger, whose Scarecrow does a stumbling comic dance just flopping down the Yellow Brick Road. Judy Garland strikes a deep yearning note when singing "Over the Rainbow," then modulates it with girlish enthusiasm. The Technicolor glory of Oz lives up to a child's imaginative expectations—the cinematographer, Harold Rosson, is a key contributor to this classic.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Dec. 17.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

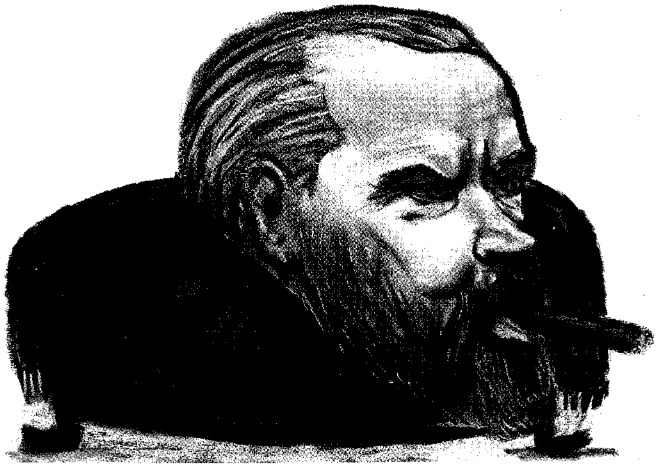
(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Screwball comedies from the thirties and forties. Through Dec. 14: "Mad Wednesday" (1946, Preston Sturges) and "Theodora Goes Wild" (†).... Dec. 15-16: "The Palm Beach Story" (†) and "The Lady Eve" (†).... Dec. 17: "It's Love I'm After" (†) and "The Perfect Specimen" (1937, Michael Curtiz).... Dec. 18: "Remember Last Night?" (1935, James Whale) and "By Candlelight" (1933, Whale).... Aug. 19: "Merrily We Live" (1938, Norman Z. McLeod) and "There Goes My Heart" (1938, McLeod).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—Dec. 13-19: "Leona's Sister Gerri" (1995, Jane Gillooly).... ¶ Dec. 15-19: The Alloy Orchestra will play the musical scores for two silent films. At 7:45, Dziga Vertov's "Man with a Movie Camera" (1928); at 9:30, Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" (1926).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films from Australia. Dec. 14 at 2:30 and Dec. 17 at 2: "The Man from Kangaroo" (1920, Wilfred Lucas; silent) and "Sunshine Sally" (1922, Lawson Harris; silent).... Dec. 14 at 6: "Money Movers" (1979, Bruce Beresford).... Dec. 14 at 8: "Heatwave" (1982, Phillip Noyce).... Dec. 15 at 2:30 and Dec. 17 at 5: "Warm Nights on a Slow Moving Train" (1988, Bob Ellis).... Dec. 15 at 6: "On Our Selection" (1932, Ken G. Hall).... Dec. 15 at 8 and Dec. 16 at 2: "Backlash" (1986, Bill Bennett).... Dec. 16 at 5: "The Singer and the Dancer" (1977, Gillian Armstrong) and "Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy" (1990, Tracey Moffatt).... Dec. 18 at 2:30: "The Sentimental Bloke" (1919) and "On Our Selection" (1920), both by Raymond Longford.... Dec. 18 at 6: "The Getting of Wisdom" (†).... Dec. 19 at 2:30: "Lonely Hearts" (†).... Dec. 19 at 6: Short avant-garde films by Paul Winkler.... ¶ Dec. 14 at 3 and 6: "My Cyprus: The Country, the Conflict, the Missing" (1995, Todd Elgin and Anita Moffatt), a documentary.... ¶ Recent films from Germany. Dec. 15 at 3 and Dec. 17 at 5: "Terminus Brest" (Gerd Kroske; in Polish, German, and Russian).... Dec. 15 at 6: "Heaven and Hell" (Hans-Christian Schmid; in German).... Dec. 15 at 8 and Dec. 18 at 3: "Fate" (Fred Kelemen).... Dec. 16 at 2:30: "Brucker's Choice" (Jan Schmidt-Garre; in German).... Dec. 16 at 5: "Kiss Me!" (Maris Pfeiffer; in German).... Dec. 17 at 2:30: "My Dear Husband" (Eva Maria Bahlrühs; in German).... Dec. 19 at 3: "The Burning Snail" (Thomas Stiller; in German).... Dec. 19 at 6: "Orson Welles—One Man Band" (Vassili Slovic and Oja Kodar).... ¶ Dec. 18 at 6:30: Films by Julius Ziz, who will be present.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Three films by Victor Erice; all in Spanish, with English subtitles. Dec. 13 at 2 and 6:15 and Dec. 15 at 4:40: "The Spirit of the Beehive" (1973).... Dec. 13 at 4:15 and 8:15 and Dec. 14 at 2: "The South" (1983).... Dec. 15 at 2 and 6:45: "Dream of Light" (1992).... ¶ New films from Spain; all in Spanish, with English subtitles. Dec. 15 at 9:30, Dec. 16 at 9, and Dec. 17 at 4: "Antárida" (Manual Huerga).... Dec. 16 at 5 and Dec. 17 at 6: "Kronen" (Montxo Armendáriz).... Dec. 16 at 7 and Dec. 17 at 4 and 8: "Jump Into the Void" (Daniel Calparsoro).... ¶ Weekend showings for children. Dec. 17 at 2: "The Wizard of Oz" (†).



At MOMA, "Orson Welles—One Man Band."

AHMET GÖRGÜN

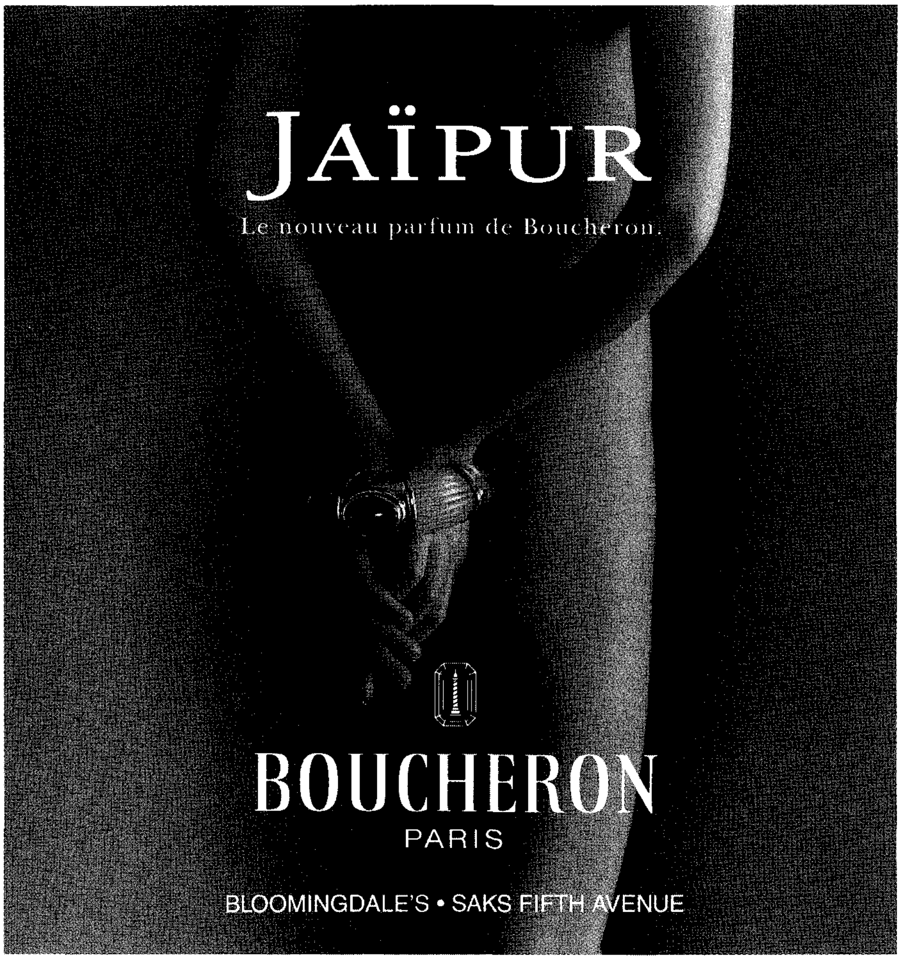
American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Dec. 16 at 2: "Tequila Sunrise" (†). The writer-director, Robert Towne, will be present to discuss his career and show scenes from other films he has been involved with.... Dec. 17 at 2: A panel discussion, "American History Into Hollywood Movie," with filmmakers Julian Krainin, Al Reinert, Alice Arlen, and Jamal Joseph.... Dec. 17 at 5: "Quiz Show" (1994, Robert Redford).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Dec. 19 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (†).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films. On Dec. 17 at 7, the feature will be "Meet Me in St. Louis" (†).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—"Beat Culture and the New America: 1950-65." Dec. 13 at 12:30 and Dec. 14 at 1:30: "Lost, Lost, Lost" (1976, Jonas Mekas).... Dec. 15-17 at 1:30: "Guns of the Trees" (1962, Mekas).... ¶ Films by Robert Frank. Dec. 13 at 4, Dec. 14 at 6:15, and Dec. 15-17 at 4: "Conversations in Vermont" (1969), "Liferaft Earth" (1969), and "About Me: A Musical" (1971).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Dec. 13 at 8: Five short films by Nick Zedd.... ¶ Three films by Robert Bresson; all in French. Dec. 14 at 8: "A Man Escaped" (1956).... Dec. 15 at 9:30: "Pickpocket" (1958).... Dec. 16 at 10: "Au Hasard, Balthazar" (1966).... ¶ Dec. 15 at 8 and Dec. 16 at 6: Two different programs of films by Beth B.... ¶ Dec. 16 at 8: Films by Peter Hutton, who will be present.... ¶ Dec. 17 at 6: Short films by Jerome Hill and Erica Anderson and by Jonas Mekas.... ¶ Dec. 17 at 8: "Made in USA" (1966, Jean-Luc Godard).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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Susan Orlean shadows holiday gift buyers in the midst of frantic deliberations.

ELAINE SMITH had only half an hour before meeting her husband for lunch at Cipriani's the other day, so she dropped by Bergdorf Goodman for a holiday dry run. Elaine is a regal woman with carved cheekbones and big dark eyes, who looks particularly good in floor-length mink, although sable would probably flatter her as well. This particular day, she was in an Oscar de la Renta mink that looked as luscious as a chocolate bar, and she was carrying a big mink muff and wearing a boxy brown hat of what looked like Persian lamb. She mentioned that at some point soon she needed to find twenty gifts. Big family? "Not really," she said. "I need things for all sorts of people—like the different salespeople who always help me here. For instance, there's a gentleman who always helps me at the Chanel makeup counter, and the lovely lady upstairs who helps me with clothes, and there is a wonderful woman who has been here for a long, long time who has been my real help with hats." She glided into the hat department. A saleslady waved to her. "Hello, Tania!" Elaine called out.

"Hello, Elaine!" Tania said. "How are you? How's your daughter?"

"Fine, fine, and your family? Good?"

"Thank God, good," Tania said. "Elaine, your hat is wonderful."

Elaine thanked her, and then told Charlotte, another hat saleslady, an interesting story about a hat she'd bought from her, which has a protruding tree-shaped top and which Elaine had decided to wear when she and her husband were going to a wedding recently, and she had spent a very long time putting the hat on just right and had then discovered that she and the hat didn't fit into the car, so her husband suggested that she lie down on the back seat, but the wedding was more than an hour's drive away, so instead she had him recline the front seat completely, so she could protect the treetop but wouldn't mess up her clothes.

"My *God!*" Charlotte said. "What kind of car?"

"His Bentley," Elaine said. "It's a very high car, but I still didn't fit."

Charlotte gave her a sympathetic nod and then said, "Well, Elaine, thank goodness, as long as you got there all right."

*

AT Bloomingdale's, Ted and Jo Pokorny, of Baltimore, were on their way to Lingerie but were waylaid by the hanging wallets in Small Leather Goods. This might have been because the hanging wallets were attractive, or maybe because Ted had just noticed the giant, glittering holiday-spirit bugle-playing insect-type creatures standing on a display pedestal between Small Leather Goods and Hosiery, and as he was admiring the insects his eye travelled downward, landing on the wallets, and then, just like that, the Pokornys' daughter Kerry was suspended—without her knowledge, of course—between a Christmas gift of lingerie (intended) and one of a hanging wallet (complete luck of the draw). In such circumstances, retail serendipity can take place. "Honey, look at these," Ted said to Jo. He was holding a wallet and also gesturing at the bugling grasshoppers.

"For Kerry?" Jo said. "Honey, she likes underwear."

"But look, Jo," Ted said, rummaging through the wallets. "Forest green!" Jo pulled off her glasses and examined the wallet. She was carrying a big shopping bag from the Incredible Christmas Store in one hand and her purse in the other. A gush of shoppers flowed around her, roaring past Small Leather Goods, eddying near Watches, pooling near Hair Accessories, and then spilling down toward Chanel Fragrances. Behind the Pokornys, a cheery guy with clean, fluffy hair was waving white scent strips and saying to people, who were ignoring him, "Try Amphibia today, ladies? Kermit the Frog's new

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

fragrance, for men, women, and frogs?"

"I guess pricewise the wallet and the lingerie would be comparable," Jo said. "So which do you like, Ted? Do you like the vertical wallet or the horizontal?"

"For Kerry, I'd say maybe vertical," Ted said. "She seems to go horizontal a lot of the time."

*

RAY MACK is in the bouncing field. His specialty is patting down customers at the Palladium night club for contraband and munitions. The other day, before he went to work, Ray—who is linebacker-size and handsome—was at Sports Cap & Hat, on Eighth Street, shopping. He was dressed in a Carolina Panthers jersey and matching headband, spacious Fila jeans, and cheddar-colored Timberland boots. "People who've been naughty to me, they're getting *nothing*," he said. "I'm just getting Christmas presents for those people who support me." He picked up a Kansas City Chiefs hat, which was in a grid of shelves with scores of other team hats; dangling above him were jester hats, Jamaican madcaps, suède Kangols, and wool berets. He said he owed someone who hadn't been naughty a Kansas City hat. "My good friends, we talk garbage to each other all year, make bets on our teams," he said. "Then, at Christmas, if my team, which is the Oakland Raiders, beats their team, I give them a hat of their team to help ease the pain." If a friend's team beats Ray's team? He smiled. "They *better* get me a hat from my team," he said, "or *else*."

*

IF you are going to Bahrain on business at Christmas, you do not want to show up empty-handed. You should take a little something. This afternoon, a well-polished Manhattan husband and wife with a Bahrain itinerary arrive at Tiffany's to try to find four rather nice little somethings to give to the four sheikhs they'll be meeting with in Bahrain during Christmas week. What do you give a sheikh who has everything? A silver bauble? An ornament for an oil well? The couple look great—she is in houndstooth gabardine and Gucci loafers, and he is in pin-striped bespoke—but distressed. They have mastered mergers, acquisitions, and trading commercial paper, but right this minute holiday shopping is their undoing. Worried-looking corporate-shopping associates respond to the distress call. May the shopping associates suggest perhaps something silver, such as a bowl? No. A fat Tesoro pen, in 14k., with a lot of ink refills? Houndstooth ponders. "Very nice," she says hesitantly. "And it *looks* expensive." It's six hundred dollars, and the refills cost something else. They could get maybe four boxes of refills, even.

They go look at clocks. The sales associates trail behind them like ducklings. The couple say yes to one brass Tiffany swing clock, then order two, then cancel both. The stock of a particular silver serving bowl soars. Then it falls. Suddenly, the clocks are back in play. At a nearby counter, a pale woman is pricing a sterling-silver pillbox in the shape of a doctor's bag. "It's *how* much?" she says. "Oh, forget it. He's not that good a doctor." Meanwhile, Bahrain is beckoning. Two hours have passed, and four gifts have finally been chosen: the pen, two clocks, and a cigarette box. The sales associates look exhausted, exhilarated, and disbelieving—like people who have survived going over Niagara Falls in a barrel. Houndstooth has one more request: she thinks they should have the cigarette box engraved. The man in Bahrain is named Abdullah al-Something. How do you engrave that? "A. al-Something"? Or "A. Something"? *Or what*? The barrel begins rolling back up Niagara Falls. If the couple can't find someone to tell them this, they will cancel the cigarette box and start over. "O.K., don't worry," one associate says, putting her pen firmly on her order pad. "We'll get it right. We'll just find you an Arab expert upstairs."

*

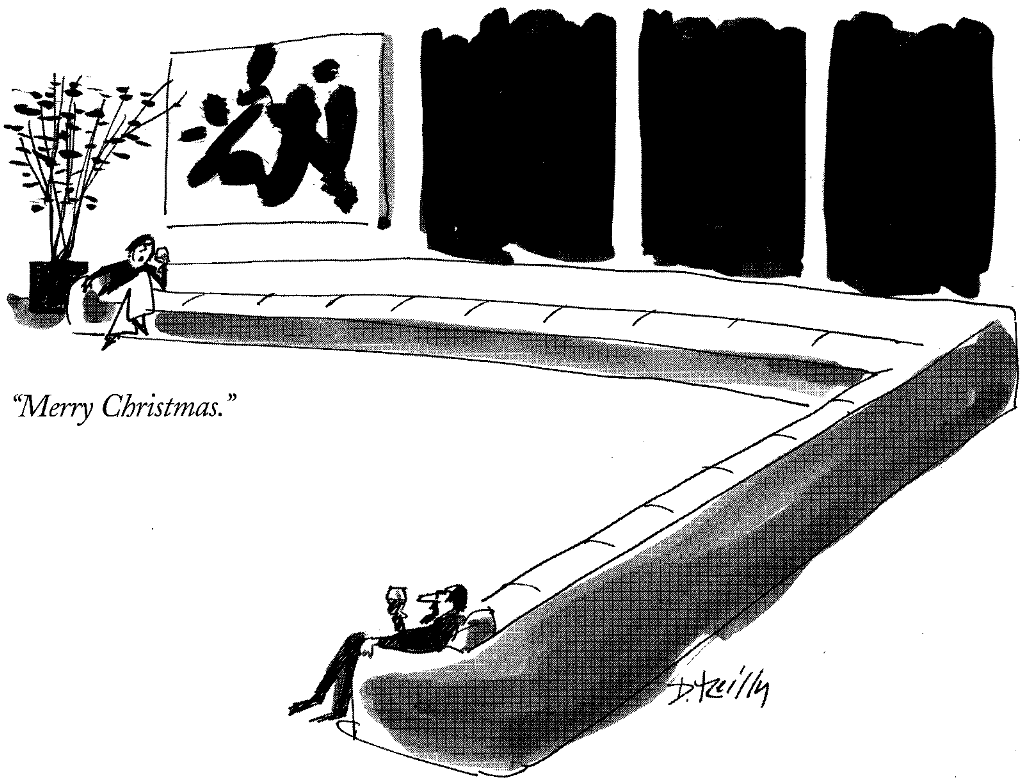
AT a midtown record store: "I'm here in New York for the weekend. I'm from Toronto. I'm a schoolteacher. I'm buying my brother some CDs for Christmas—two albums by a group called, let me see now, uh, Queen. I listened to the Queen group and it's really very nice, so I bought one also for myself. Actually, this is the second time I've bought them."

"Why are you buying them again?"

"Because after I bought them yesterday I left them on a bus. Poof! Gone. Just like that. So now I'm back at the record store, and my CDs are somewhere on a bus. From now on, I'm walking."

*

THE salespeople at Old Navy Clothing are wearing walkie-talkies these days, which is a good thing. After all, the store is huge, and something like a fleece situation can erupt at any moment, so excellent communication between the floor and the stockroom is needed to keep a fleece situation from turning into an undersupply event or, worse, a supply-demand emergency. What happens is that you offer a this-year's-must-have Christmas gift—say, a fleece pullover—at an excellent price point—say, twenty-four dollars—and you pile the fleece pullovers on one of those big tables that inspire people to grab for the things on them as if they were cheese samples at the Grand Union, and in about one minute the fleece is all gone. Hence, a situation. Back in ancient



"Merry Christmas."

"Same to you."

times, someone working the floor would have had to trek to the stockroom and shout to one of those guys lounging around reading the *Racing Form* to go get some more fleece, and then trek back and tell the customers that more fleece was on the way. Holiday shopping was like that, in the olden days. Now it's an operation that would make a NATO commander proud.

One recent Wednesday at Old Navy, a customer named Steven Weiss had grabbed a fleece pullover before there was a situation. "I'm doing really well," he said. "You should have been with me at Crate & Barrel. Whew! What a store!" He was now wedged near a tie rack between two guys in giant down-filled yellow parkas, who were also checking out the ties. Steven, who has a broad, peachy face and fuzzy light hair, worked one arm through the puff of parkas and got hold of a foulard tie. "Actually, I don't do Christmas," he said. "I do Hanukkah. I'm studying to be a cantor. I live here, but I'm doing an interneship at a synagogue in Atlanta." He dropped the tie into his shopping basket. "I'm kind of stuck between the two holidays, though, because my sister's boyfriend's mother isn't Jewish, and we're all celebrating together, so I have to get Hanukkah *and* Christmas gifts this year."

There was a sudden assault on plaid flannel shirts behind him. A clerk called into his walkie-talkie, "I need backup in men's flannels A.S.A.P.!" In Steven's shopping basket now: one fleece pullover (sister's boyfriend); one flannel shirt (sister's boyfriend's brother); one ivory turtleneck (sister). Also, a striped shirt and the tie. For? "Oh, I think I took care of everyone and every holiday already," he said sheepishly. "This is just for me."

*

Mom (in this case, a specific mom, but a mom who can also represent all moms who are trying to get on-line with their computer-wise children), one afternoon in a computer store on Fifth Avenue: "He's eleven years old. He does a lot of desktop publishing on the computer. He does his homework on it. I was thinking of, oh, upgrading for Christmas. My only worry is that his teacher called me and said he'd been doing extra social-studies reports—you know, those country reports they do?—on his computer and selling them to his friends. He did the Dominican Republic for himself and sold Puerto Rico to a friend."

Computer-Store Salesperson: "The memory file . . . not upgradable . . . blah blah blah . . . if you download . . . Are you on the Web? . . . The print buffer . . . blah blah blah . . ."

Mom: "O.K., *hold on.* I got him Microsoft basketball and a joystick, some brand with initials, I don't know what."

Salesperson: "Great. But what about the parallel port . . . goose up your performance . . . blah blah blah . . . if you're running Windows . . . specialty program! Oh, and applications . . . blah blah blah . . . more RAM! More RAM!"

Mom: "I think maybe I'll get him tennis shoes."

*

Anu is from Finland but lives in London and is visiting New York. She calls to mind Transylvania, because she has papery skin, wears bat-wing eyeliner, and is dressed in a black velvet morning coat and a black top hat and black lace fingerless gloves, even though it is about three in the afternoon. She is wandering around the East Village and would like a couple of Christmas gifts to take back to London tomorrow. Actually, Anu is not keen on Christmas. "Ever since I was a child, my Christmases were really bad," she says. Her voice is feathery and mild, fading in and out, like a weak station on the radio. "I sort of decided back then to mostly forget about it." The gifts she needs are mainly for friends. Family, too, but not primarily. "My friends are like me. The sort of people who are kind of . . . apart from their families."

Anu has stopped in at Little Rickie, a shop on First Avenue that specializes in the sort of gifts you didn't realize you needed—Pope Paul refrigerator magnets, copies of Elvis Presley's driver's license, Israeli Bazooka bubble gum, rubber babies, and fake-fur picture frames. Anu looks pleased. The little store is crammed to the rafters and twinkling with attractive things made of plastic. As Anu browses, a nice-looking woman with a nose ring and napping twin babies in a double-wide stroller is pricing windup toys from China, and a man wearing an unflattering shade of lipstick is looking at the Magnetic Poetry Kits. Anu loves the mood rings, the moon-shaped candles, the fake-fur evening bag, and "The Little Vampire's Diary." She is tempted by a frog beanbag, but ends up with only one gift—a book called "Voodoo: Search for the Spirit." "It's more spiritual than the beanbag," she explains. "I think that's good for the holidays."

✻

DEBBIE VELEZ and her two aunts, Maria Velez and Maria Carire, were at Bradlees on Fourteenth Street on a recent Sunday, but it was actually no big deal. Granted, they were Christmas shopping for the family—toys for Starr and Zoraida, Power Rangers for Tre, a tea set for Willy and Giselle—but the truth is, whether it's Christmas or not, Debbie and one or sometimes two Aunt Marias come to Bradlees every single Sunday. It's a pleasant way to spend the day. Debbie lives with her Aunt Maria Velez, in East Harlem, and Maria Carire lives in the Bronx. "It's like a routine with us," Debbie was saying. "The Bradlees circular is in the *Daily News* on Sunday—that's where they say all the specials they're going to be throwing down that week. Then we come. We start at the top of the store and work our way down."

"She likes to come early," Maria Carire said, pointing to Maria Velez, who was examining some holiday slipper socks with rubber-gripper soles.

"What do you mean, *early*?" Maria Velez asked. She shrugged. "I just come when it's time to come."

Debbie leaned across her shopping cart. "We get our Christmas shopping done little by little, because we've been here every Sunday since *last* Christmas," she said. She pointed to a Bissell hand vac in the cart. "I got that for my Aunt Maria Velez. That's her Christmas from me."

"You know what?" Maria Carire said. "My feet are killing me."

Debbie said, "Killing you? No! We haven't even done the second or first floor!"

Maria Velez said, "I'm not ready to quit. I want to do a little more. For me, shopping—it's good for my mind. I love it. I love it! And if I had money I'd probably love it even more."

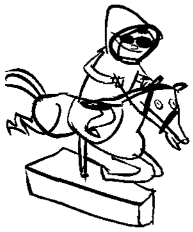
SWEPT UP WHOLE

You aren't *swept up whole*,
however it feels. You're
atomized. The wind passes.
You recongeal. It's
a surprise.

—KAY RYAN

✻

ON the first Friday in December, the coolest thing happened: there was no school. At least, there was no school at the Fieldston School, where Serena Selkin is in eighth grade, so she and her best friend, Portia Harris, decided to get some of their Christmas shopping done. They were going to F. A. O. Schwarz first, so they got a cab in front of Serena's apartment, on the Upper West Side, to head across town. Both girls are tall, slim, and lovely, and on this particular day they were dressed almost identically, in huge, pillowy ski jackets, faded and distressed bluejeans, and sneakers. They both carried backpacks, and their money was in similar but not exactly identical plastic wallets from Sanrio, the Japanese maker of the cartoony Hello Kitty product line. As the cab cut across Central Park, they gazed out the window. Both seemed contemplative. "I got up this morning and I couldn't believe it was, like, *snowing*," Portia said. "I was, like, I'm dreaming."



"Yeah," Serena said. "I know."

"We're going to the best stores," Portia said. "Oh, we're not going to Patricia Field, though. I like it, but it's a little wild. She has, like, rubber hot pants."

"I brought my list," Serena said, pulling out three pages of notes. "It's what I want and what I have to get other people."

"Oops," Portia said, turning her head. "I shouldn't, like, look at it."

"Well, whatever," Serena said, smoothing the pages. "You know."

SERENA SELKIN'S CHRISTMAS LIST

Mommy—Astrology books, Beatles Anthology
Daddy + Susan (w/Deyna)—Antique
Deyna—Something cool from the Village

Friends:
Kira—something "girly" (animal slippers—Sesame St., Sanrio mini-backpack)
Portia—Pocahontas baby T (B'day), Sanrio beeper case (Xmas)
Annie—organizer
Niko—"spiritual thing"
Sara—aromatherapy that will energize her
Lauren, Valencia, Elise, Ja-Ji—little things
Ben and Steven—toys from FAO Schwarz

For me:
used jeans—Infinity
light blue/blue Adidas
long skirt
Metallic Vamp—Chanel—or pastel-purple nail polish
black + white posters
dewberry perfume—the Body Shop

*Get 100 dollars from bank

At F. A. O. Schwarz, Serena and Portia rode up the escalator to the second floor. Someone dressed like a clown was demonstrating a remote-control car, a bell was clanging, Christmas music was tweeting over the loudspeakers. In the store's candy department, small children were hopping up and down like fleas. It felt like contained, innocent, cheerful chaos—like those scenes in "Jaws" right before the shark surfaces. "Did you see all those little kids?" Portia said. "Sometimes this store is a little too much for them. They come in here, and they literally, like, *die*."

"You know, I need something for my little stepcousins," Serena said. "Should I get them, like, puppets?"

"How about Patrick the Pup slippers?" Portia said.

"Oh, no, that's great for Kira, the slippers!" Serena said. "They're girly, I think." She and Portia had recently read in *Seventeen* that all girls fit one of three personality types—girly, flashy, or trendy—and that you can pick gifts according to type. Kira, they decided, was a Drew Barrymore/girly. "I'm more Alicia Silverstone," Serena said. "That's the trendy type."

Portia said, "I'm not exactly sure about myself. I think I'm sort of between flashy and Serena."

They went totally crazy in the Sanrio department. Portia got twenty-six Sanrio-character pencils and about eight pens, and Serena got a Little Twin Stars mini-backpack and four miniature gumball machines—Hello Kitty, Keroppi Frog, Pochacco the Street Dog Extraordinaire, and Ahiru No Pekkle Duck. The gumball machines were for her good-but-not-best friends. She also got a Pochacco beeper case for Portia, but she did it very secretively, because she didn't want Portia to see. There was one terrifying moment when Portia glanced into Serena's shopping bag. By then, though, the Pochacco beeper case that Serena had got for her was wrapped and bagged, so the Christmas-surprise thing was still O.K. ♦

HARRY WINSTON

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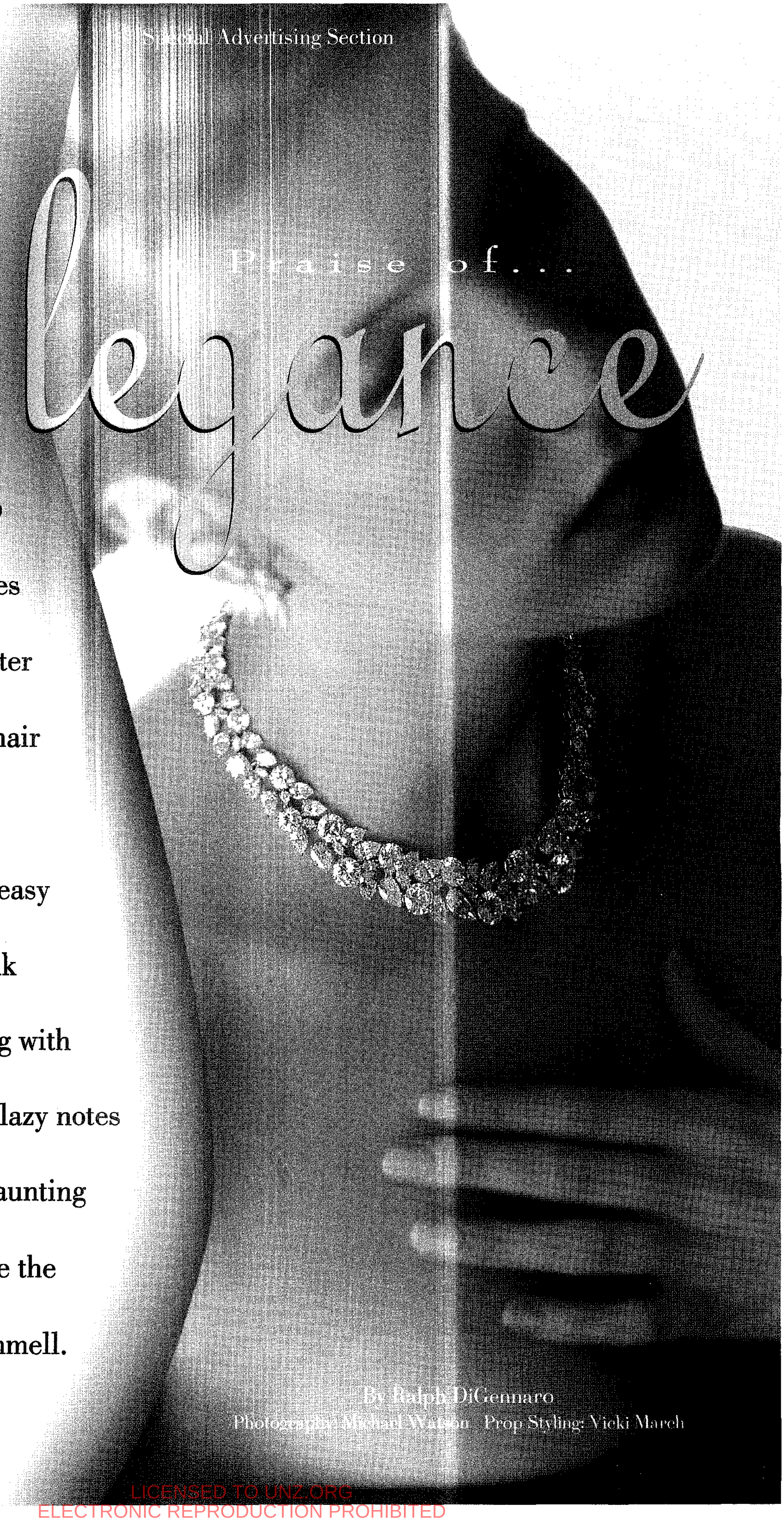


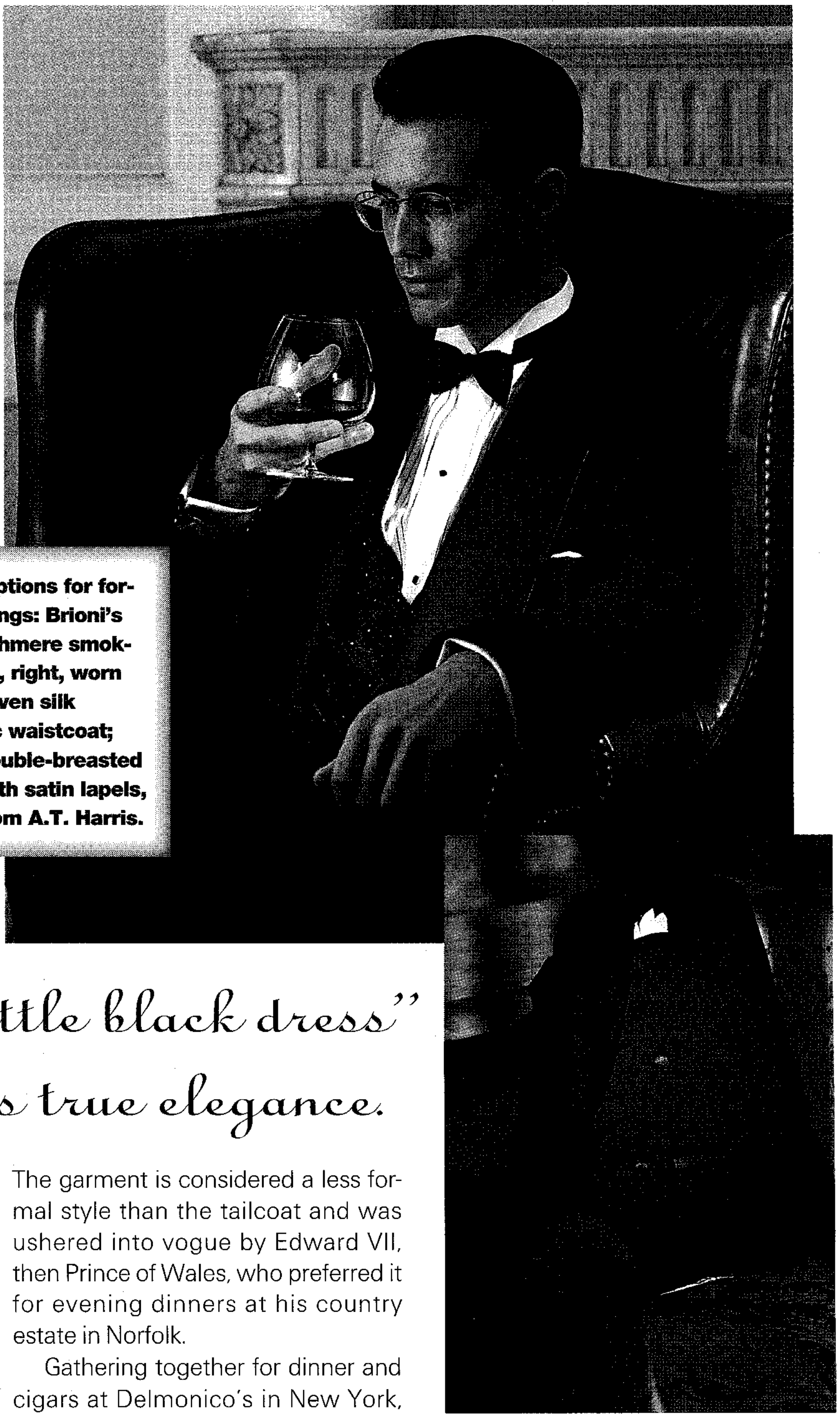
In Praise of...

Elegance

THINK OF THE WORD "tuxedo" and images abound of Cole Porter and Noel Coward, hair parted and slicked, champagne within easy reach, visions of silk satin, vases teeming with calla lilies and the lazy notes of a lone alto sax haunting the background like the ghost of Beau Brummell.

By Ralph DiGennaro

Photography: Michael Watson Prop Styling: Vicki March



Elegant options for formal evenings: Brioni's piped cashmere smoking jacket, right, worn over a woven silk geometric waistcoat; classic double-breasted tuxedo with satin lapels, below, from A.T. Harris.

Then again, an equally apt visual could have Marlene Dietrich as she appeared in the thirties movie classic *Morocco*, slithering across the screen in a man-tailored tuxedo, stiff-front shirt, bow tie and studs, sacrificing none of her sultry sex appeal in the process.

Whatever the setting, there is little doubt that evening dress, from white tie and tails to the semiformal tuxedo or dinner jacket, does things for a man, sartorially speaking, that no other element in a gentleman's wardrobe can. Indeed, "black tie" connotes, even defines, true elegance. Like the chic black dress in women's ready-to-wear, the tuxedo is classic and has been experiencing a renaissance of sorts in the last decade.

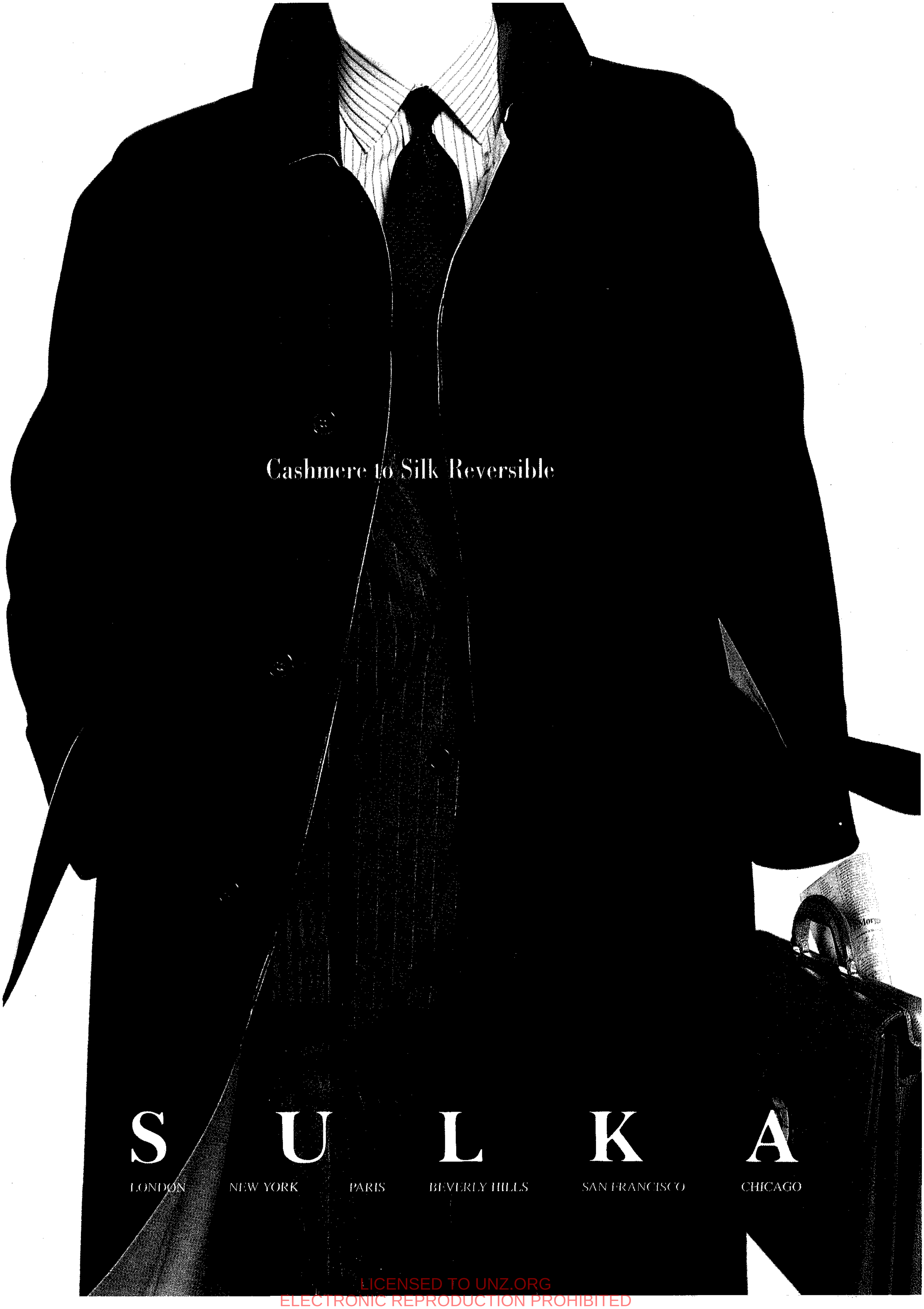
Here in the nineties it is clear that we are once again in the midst of "occasion dressing," not unlike that of the thirties when propriety and elegance were part of everyday life and putting on one's finery, particularly for evening, was eagerly embraced. The elegant era of Bogart and Bacall, Fred and Ginger, William Powell, Cary Grant and Hollywood glamour still informs our everyday lives in terms of fashion. We look longingly back to an era and its icons, when style mattered and dressing well was a virtue.

Like the chic "little black dress" the tuxedo defines true elegance.

Like much of what is classic, the tuxedo has suffered its share of fashion aberrations over the years. Originally worn in America by residents of the tony enclave in upstate New York called Tuxedo Park, the garment is, basically, a standard suit style made up in the fabric and detailing exclusive to formal evening dress. The garment is considered a less formal style than the tailcoat and was ushered into vogue by Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, who preferred it for evening dinners at his country estate in Norfolk.

Gathering together for dinner and cigars at Delmonico's in New York, the Tuxedo Park denizens began wearing their new version of formal wear, prompting stares and gossip as to the propriety of men in what looked to be abbreviated versions of the formal tailcoat. Not knowing what to call the jackets or the men fashion-courageous enough to wear them in public, people began to refer to them as the "tuxedos." Hence, the name world-known today.

For a man to wear a dressing gown when entertaining at home during the Victorian period was considered quite fashionable. However, in the company of women, the coat had to be long enough to cover the buttocks. When the company was exclusively men, no such



Cashmere to Silk Reversible
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rules applied and many fashion-conscious men had abbreviated versions of their robes de chambre made.

Smoking jackets and full length robes of brocaded silk or plush velvet are still with us and are the most elegant part of a man's wardrobe. Fine men's stores in New York rooted in the classics seem to be flourishing more than ever, underscoring the cultured man's demand for quality, luxury and elegance in his furnishings as well as his clothing. Bergdorf Goodman dedicated an entire store to what once was a marginal men's business in its original women's store. The free-standing store called Bergdorf Goodman Men stands proudly along upper Fifth Avenue, a bastion of fine gentlemen's clothing, furnishings, toiletries and accessories. Sulka, too, in the last few years has been brought back to a standard of excellence and quality worthy of its time-honored name. Even Paul Stuart, the traditionalist men's store on Madison Avenue has broadened its assortments and style point of view and continues to be the epicenter for the finest men's furnishings in the world. On 57th Street, Brioni, world-renowned Italian handtailors, have opened an atelier that is the epitome of the ever-elegant Roman style. All these shops continue to carry luxurious smoking jackets and robes for the erudite, discerning man.

True luxury for every occasion, as with the silk twill robe with woven paisley shawl lapels from Paul Stuart, left, and Sulka's black wool gabardine evening coat, right, worn with ivory silk and cashmere muffler.

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If that sounds high-flown, perhaps you should bear in mind that this wristwatch was designed from the start to set new standards in quartz chronograph timekeeping. It does so with the reliability and understated simplicity that have become hallmarks of the pilot's watch family from IWC, yet at the same time has carved out a distinctive niche for itself.

Measuring just 23.30 mm in diameter and 3.70 mm in thickness, the movement in the pilot's quartz chronograph, with its analog display and aggregate timing, is the smallest of its kind ever made. Even more astonishing, considering its size, is the fact that the movement contains no fewer than 233 individual parts and two quartz-controlled stepping motors to put you in total control. So whether you're interested in the time of day (shown in hours, minutes and seconds), the date display (with rapid advance adjustment), the chronograph seconds hand (accurate to 1/4 second), the minutes counter (up to 30 minutes) and the hour counter (up to 12 hours), the pilot's chronograph delivers it all. Without any unnecessary frills.

In fact, when you consider everything it has to offer, the thing that will probably most surprises you about the pilot's chronograph from IWC is the fact that you have not yet make one your own?

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When we speak of a "classic" work of art, we are alluding to its immortality. In this sense, the mechanical wristwatch – a typically classic notion – is not bound to any particular age. At the same time, there is no earthly reason why it should not be redesigned to reflect the needs of its own.

The pilot's mechanical chronograph from IWC is a classic example. It features a high-precision 7902 caliber chronograph movement. It shows the time of day in hours, minutes and seconds. It times events to 1/8 second exactly. And it keeps track of aggregate times up to 12 hours.

As a member of the world-renowned pilot's watch range from IWC, the pilot's chronograph naturally comes with a soft iron inner case to provide additional protection against magnetism, a domed sapphire glass, screw-in crown and stainless steel push-pieces. All water-resistant to 60 m.

Although the pilot's chronograph in stainless steel represents another masterpiece in a grand tradition, IWC's watchmakers were unable to resist the temptation of launching yet another much-heralded world first: a model in high-tech ceramic (zirconium oxide), a shatter-proof material whose future lies in the unplumbed regions of outer space.

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If you're looking for absolute control, however, what you really need is a stopwatch that can time a second event or action – like a lap or a production process, for example – or as many intermediate times as you wish. And it was for times like this that IWC developed its split-seconds Doppelchronograph, with its so-called fly-back hand and an extra push-piece at the 10 o'clock position. Press it to read a recorded time, and then press it again to make the fly-back hand catch up with the seconds hand.

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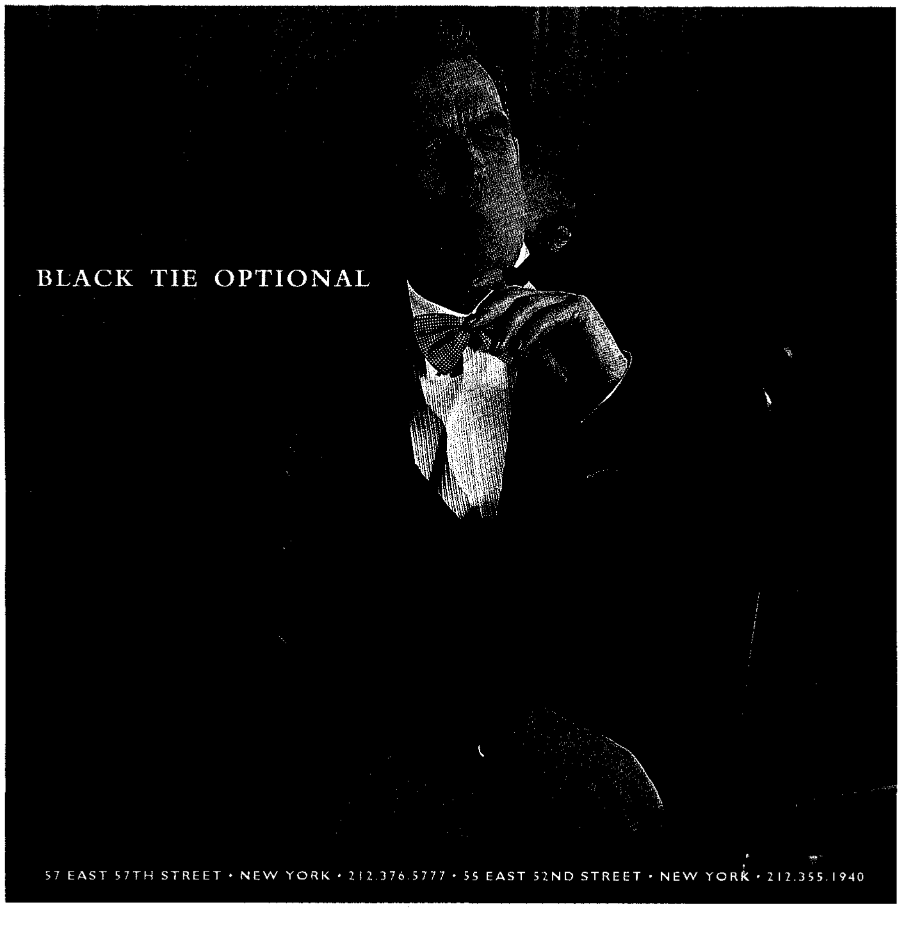
A stylish assortment of fine furnishings and accessories: pleated cotton formal shirt, neckwear and cuff links, left, from Bergdorf Goodman Men; platinum pocket watch for the wrist, above, from IWC; and patent leather pumps with elastic band, right, by Fratelli Rossetti.

While the stylish man's wardrobe would almost certainly include a well-tailored tuxedo, there is nothing wrong with renting if one has to, provided the rental is from a reputable house that deals only in quality clothing. In seeking out a fine formal rental outlet, look to those that have years of experience in the business, such as A.T. Harris in New York.

Formal shirts are as elegant as they ever were, with the stiff bat-wing collar style, a fashion legacy of George Bryan "Beau" Brummell, once again being worn, with either a pique or pleated bib front. The most luxurious formal shirts are hand-sewn and made of pure cotton voile or fine broadcloth. Double-barrel French cuffs are worth the price they command and look decidedly elegant.

Cummerbunds are strictly a matter of choice, but even among those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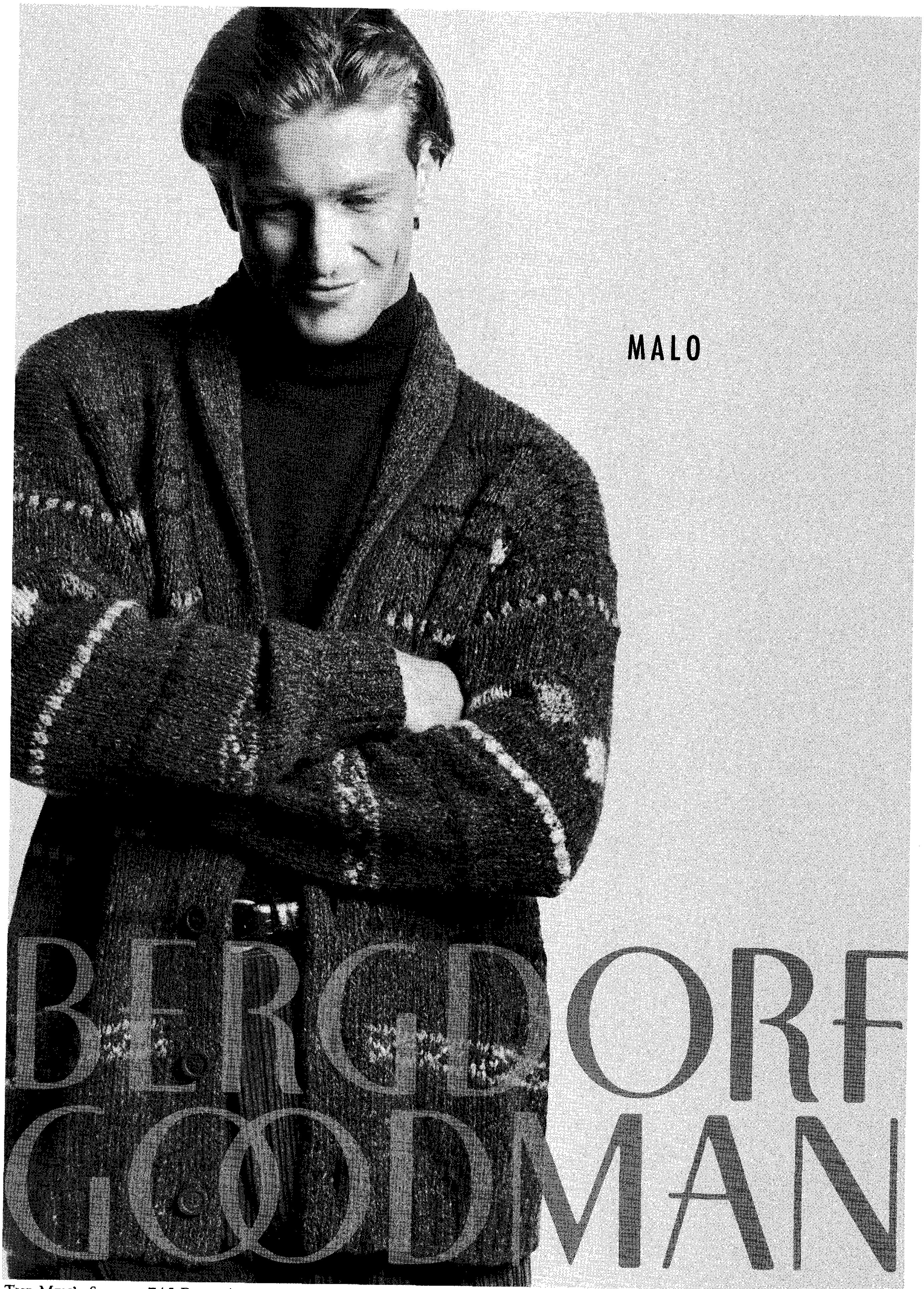
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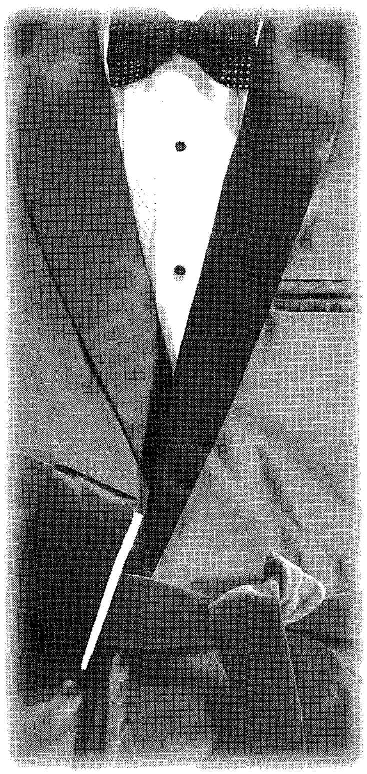

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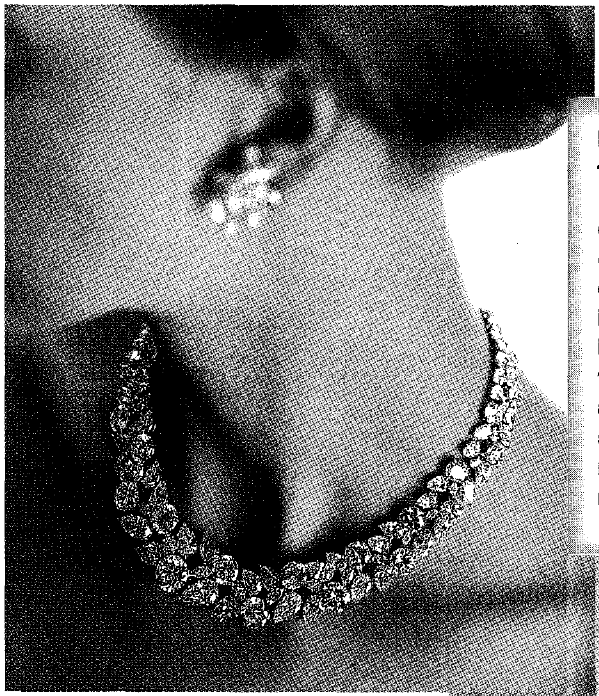

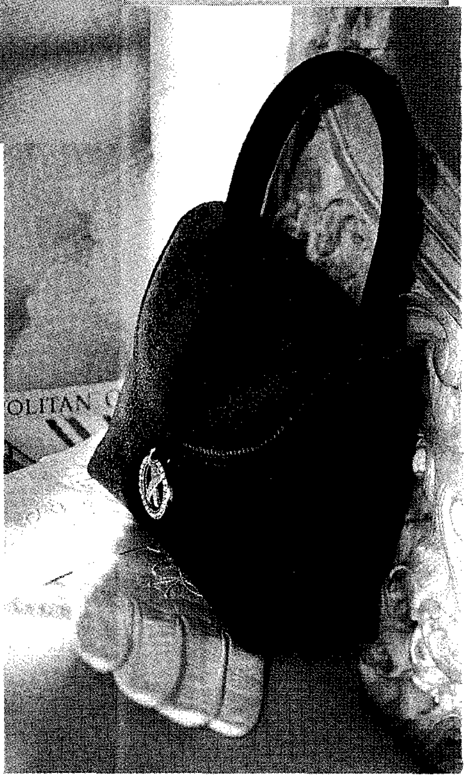

Bejeweled elegance is found in Harry Winston's 123-carat, platinum-set diamond necklace and diamond cluster earclips, left; Paloma Picasso's velvet evening bag, below, with signature kiss in diamonds and gold; and Gucci's satin evening pumps, right, adorned with diamond studded horse bits.

who favor them they are best worn with single-breasted, peaked-lapel tuxedo jackets only. Even more elegant are the luxurious formal woven silk waistcoats often seen under a tuxedo. The most stylish ones are in subtle tones of gray, silver, or deep burgundy, and feature woven geometric motifs, stripes or mini-checks.

Always appropriate to evening attire is a silk or linen pocket square peeking from the breast pocket of a tuxedo or smoking jacket. White is always right, although holiday tones of gold, burgundy or emerald-green silk can add a festive touch.

As for formal shoes, patent leather is considered classic, whether as a lace-up or slip-on. But for comfort and elegance, formal slippers in silk faille or velvet with gold embroidered initials at the toe cap are the ticket.

Better Italian shoe designers, such as Fratelli Rossetti, often design variations on a theme, but their formal shoes are always stylish and appropriate. To keep things elegant and luxurious, silk or lightweight wool formal hosiery works best in solid black or with the addition of a subtle clock pattern that is truly Old World in style.

For a roguish finish, a silk or silk and cashmere muffler either casually tossed about the neck or neatly worn in an ascot tie looks superb peeking out from an all-black evening coat or trench. With formal outerwear, the simpler the better. The addition of a boutonniere—red or white carnation only—would do Fred Astaire proud.

Just as men add elegant details to evening dress with their furnishings and haberdashery, women crave elements of style in their choice of jewelry, shoes, and accessories. Holly Golightly may have had breakfast at Tiffany's but she dined at such bastions of elegance and prestige as Harry Winston, also on Fifth Avenue, where a diamond necklace that took three years to create may have a price tag tantamount to the GNP of an emerging nation. But once worn, the woman looks like a million...and then some.

Jewelry designers in particular have begun to extend their talents into new areas of elegance, buoyed by the success of their stylish baubles, bangles, and beads. Paloma Picasso has produced a new collection of uniquely designed evening bags in formal velvet and silver or gold moiré, many of which feature the designer's recognizable kiss symbol of two crossing lines.

More and more, accessory designers are using jewels as a source of fashion detailing that results in dressier looks. Gucci has embellished their elegant black evening pumps with jeweled hardware such as silver harnesses across the vamp for a more luxurious style that recalls the glamour of a bygone era.

Even essentials such as watches are being designed with a nod toward elegance and have become fashion accessories in their own right. Those by the International Watch Company, for example, are masterful timepieces, so precise is their function, so luxurious is their design.

As fashion moves forward toward the new millennium, the desire and need for some semblance of elegance in our lives stands as the last gambit against modern technology and inevitable uniformity. In an age of fiberglass, we're searching for a gem. Cole Porter and Noel Coward would have approved.

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ANNALS OF GASTRONOMY

LOOK BACK IN HUNGER

Cookbooks, old and new, and the perils of the kitchen.

BY ANTHONY LANE

READY? Ready. O.K., here we go. "Fold the wings akimbo, tucking the wing ends under the shoulders as shown here." Lovely. "Then, on the same side of the chicken where you came out from the second knee . . ." Umm. "Poke the needle through the upper arm of the wing." Wings with arms, like a bat's. Cool. "Catch the neck skin, if there . . ." Hang on. *If there*? If not there, where? Whose neck is this, anyway? ". . . and pin it to the backbone, and come out through the second wing." And go for a walk in the snow, and don't come back till next year.

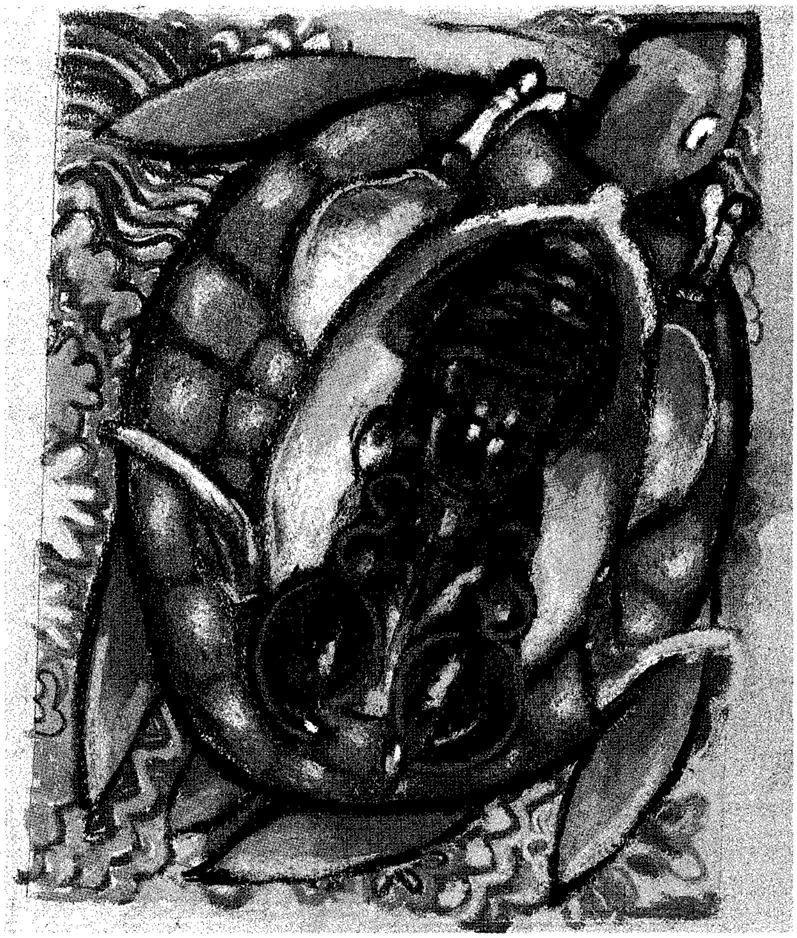
This wing-stitching drill, as any cook will tell you, is from the celebrated "To Truss a Chicken" section of Julia Child's "The Way to Cook" (Knopf; $60). It's a pretty easy routine, really, as long as you take it slow, run through a batch of test poultry first, have a professional chef on hand to help you through the bad times, and feel no shame when you get arrested and charged with satanic drumstick abuse. Julia Child is a good woman, with no desire to faze or scald us; she genuinely wants us to bard that bird, to cook it, and to carve it. ("Fork-grab under the knee. . . . Soon you'll see the ball joint where the leg-thigh meets the small of the back.") Hell, she wouldn't mind if we went ahead and *ate* the damn thing.

I don't know what it is about cookbooks, but they really drain my giblets. I buy them, and use them, and study them with the micro-attentive care of a papyrologist, and still they make me feel that I am missing out. I follow instructions, and cook dinner for friends, and the friends are usually friends again by the next morning, but what they consume at my table bears no more than a fleeting, tragically half-assed resemblance to the dish that I read about in the recipe. Although I am not a good cook, I am not a dreadful one, either; I once had a go at *mouclade d'Aunis*, once made a brave fist of *cul de veau braisé Angevin*, and once came very close to buying a carp. Last summer, I did something difficult with monkfish tails; the dish took two days to prepare, a full nine minutes to eat, and three days to wash up after. But an hour in front of my cookbooks is enough to slash my ambitions to the bone—to convince me that in terms of culinary evolution I remain a scowling tree-dweller whose idea of haute cuisine is to grub for larvae under dead bark.

And we all know the name of the highly developed being standing tall at the other end of the scale. Super-skilled, free of fear, the last word in human efficiency, Martha Stewart is the woman who convinced a million Americans that they have the time, the means, the right, and—damn it—the *duty* to pipe a little squirt of soft cheese into the middle of a snow pea, and to continue piping until there are "fifty to sixty" stuffed peas raring to go. Never mind the taste; one glance at this woman's quantities is enough to spirit you into a different and a cleaner world. "I discovered a fantastic thing when preparing 1,500 potatoes for the Folk Art Show," Martha writes in her latest book. "The Martha Stewart Cookbook" (Clarkson Potter; $27.50) is a magisterial compendium of nine previous books, and offers her fans another chance to sample Martha's wacky punch lines ("Tie securely with a single chive") and her naughtiest promises ("This hearty soup is simple to assemble"). So coolly thrown off, that last line, and you read right through it without picking up the outrageous implication. Since when did you "assemble" a soup? Even the ingredients are a fright. "Three pounds fish frames from flounder or fluke," Martha says brightly, sounding like Henry Higgins. To the rest of humanity, soup is something that involves five pans, two dented strainers, scattered bones that would baffle a forensic pathologist, and the unpleasant sensation of hot stock rising from the pot, condensing on your forehead, and running down into the pot again as lightly flavored sweat.

Martha does not perspire. There is not a squeak of panic in the woman's soul.

She knows exactly where the two layers of cheesecloth can be found when the time comes to strain the stock. She assembles her fish chowder as if it were a model airplane. Moreover, she does so without appearing to spend any time in the kitchen. "One of the most important moments on which to expend extra effort is the beginning of a party, often an awkward time, when guests feel tentative and insecure," she says. The *guests* are insecure? How about the frigging cook? Believe me, Martha, I'm not handing round the phyllo triangles with lobster filling during that awkward time; I'm out back, holding on to the sink, finishing off the Côtes du Rhône that was supposed to go into the stew. But Martha Stewart is an idealist who has cunningly disguised herself as a helping hand; readers look up to her as a conservative angel who keeps the dream house tidy, radiant, ready for pals, and filled with family. "If I had to choose one essential element for the success of an Easter brunch, it would be children," she writes, as if preparing to grill the kids over a high flame.



ADRIANNE GILL

Yet the conservative image won't quite fit. The Stewart paean to the joys of Thanksgiving ("To not cook and entertain on this day would seem tantamount to treason") is itself rather joyless in its zealotry; you keep hitting something sharp and steely in her writings—a demiglace intolerance of ordinary mortals. Her kitchen is bewitched, and she's Samantha. You won't see it on her TV shows, but I bet Martha Stewart can wiggle her nose and turn any chauvinist Darrin into crabmeat. If you're planning to fork-grab her under the knee, forget it. Was it the spirit of the season or a quiet celebration of dominant female power that led to the baked-ham recipe at the start of "Martha Stewart's Menus for Entertaining" (Clarkson Potter; $30)? It looks succulent in the accompanying photograph, and I have long yearned to make it, but three factors have restrained me. First, it serves sixteen, and I don't know that many people who would be happy to munch ham at one another. Second, you need "one bunch chervil with flowers." (That's plain silly, if not quite as ridiculous as a recipe that I came across at the peak of nouvelle cuisine, in the nineteen-eighties—a recipe that demanded *thirty-four* chervil leaves.) Third, the ham must be baked for five and a half hours in a pan lined with fresh-cut grass. As in meadow. "Locate an area in advance with tender, young, organically grown grass that has not yet been cut," our guide advises. "It is best to cut it very early in the morning while the dew is still evident." I'm sorry, Martha, but it just won't do. I have inspected the grass in my back yard, and I am not prepared to serve Baked Ham with Cat Whiff and Chopped Worms.

THERE must be millions of other people who refuse to get up at dawn and mow the lawn for dinner. This fellow feeling should be a comfort to me, yet somehow it makes no difference. Cooking, for all the apple-cheeked, home-baked community spirit in which food writers try to enfold it, is essentially a solitary art—or, at least, a guarantee of lonely distress. When your hollandaise is starting to curdle and you've tried the miraculous ice-cube trick and you've tried beating a fresh egg yolk and folding in the curdled stuff and the result still looks like the climactic scene of a David Cronenberg picture, it doesn't really help to know that someone is having the very same problem in Pittsburgh. Your only friend, in fact, is that shelf of cookbooks just out of reach. Leaving the sauce to its own devices, you grab each volume in turn, frantic for advice, and make your fatal mistake: you start to read. Two yards away, the sauce is separating fast—the lemon is pursing its lips, the eggs are halfway back to the fridge—but you don't care. By now, determined to find out where you went wrong, and already dreaming of a perfect future sauce, you are deep into Georges Auguste Escoffier's recipe for hollandaise: "Remove the pan to the side of the stove or place it in a bain-marie." Well, which?

In that simple "or" reside both the delight and the frustration of the classic cookbook. It should ideally tell you almost everything but not all that you need to know, leaving a tiny crack of uncertainty that can become your own personal abyss. If any text counts as a classic, it is Escoffier's "Le Guide Culinaire," which was published in 1903. Escoffier was a colleague of César Ritz, and a man of such pantry-stocking initiative that when Paris was besieged in the Franco-Prussian War he fed the starving troops on zoo animals and stray pets. I eagerly scanned the "Guide" for pan-seared hartebeest or poodle mousse à la Fifi sauvage, but all I could find was this unflinching recipe for clear turtle soup:

> To kill the turtle, lay it on its back at the edge of the table with the head hanging over the side. Take a double meat hook and

> place one hook into the upper jaw and suspend a sufficiently heavy weight in the hook at the other end so as to make the animal extend its neck. . . .

It goes without saying that the flippers should be blanched, and that "the green fat which is used for making the soup must be collected carefully." But where, exactly, does this green fat come from? The author doesn't tell us. Somewhere between the carapace and the plastron, presumably, but I'm not sure that I really want to know.

Whether cooks still use Escoffier—or Larousse, or Carême, or any of the other touchstones of French cuisine—is open to question. It is not just the encyclopedic spread of these Frenchmen's interests, their desire to chew on something that we would prefer to watch in a wildlife documentary, that feels out of date; it is also their unshakable conviction that we already know our worldly way around a kitchen, that they are merely grinding a little fresh information into our basic stock of knowledge. When Escoffier tells us to "stud the fattened pullet with pieces of truffle and poach it in the usual manner," he presumes that we habitually spend our weekends looking for pullets to fatten and that we can poach them in our sleep. Many readers are scared off by this assumption; I feel flattered and consoled by it, all the more so because I know it to be dead wrong. I am not a truffle stud, nor was meant to be. Yet I willingly dream myself into a time when you could "quickly fry 10 blackbirds in hot butter"—just because I relish the imaginative jump required to get there, not because I particularly want a blackbird-lettuce-and-tomato sandwich for my lunch.

In other words, the great cookbooks are more like novels than like home-improvement manuals. What these culinary bibles tell you to do is far less beguiling than the thought of a world in which such things might be done. A single line, for instance, from Benjamin Renaudet's "Secrets de la Bonne Table," published at the beginning of this century, effortlessly summons up the century that has just ended: "When the first partridges are shot in the early morning, send them down to the house." If that grabs you, take a look at "Culinary Jottings for Madras," a collection of recipes by Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General Arthur Robert Kenney-Herbert. First published in 1878, the book tells you more about the nature of imperial rule in India than any number of political histories. If you can feed a party of eight on snipe soup, fish fillets à la Peg Woffington, mutton cutlets à la Moscovite, oyster Kramouskys, braised capon, and a brace of wild ducks with bigarade sauce, if you can finish off with prune jelly, iced molded pudding with strawberries, and cheese, and if you can serve and eat all that when it's ninety-five degrees in the shade, then you can conquer any country you like. Nothing can stand up to Peg Woffington.

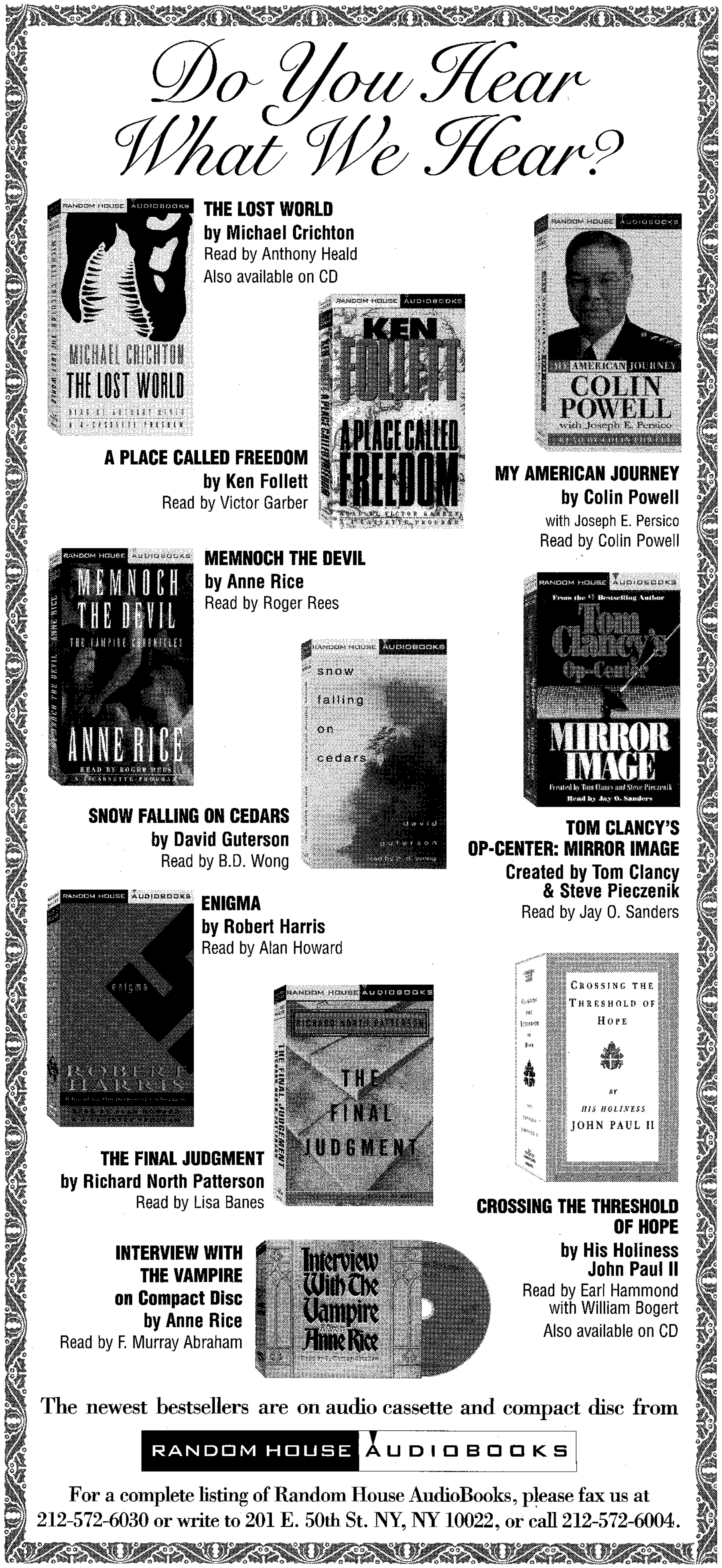
There is a pinch of snob nostalgia in reading this stuff, of course, but I don't think it ruins the flavor. What is attractive about cookbooks, after all—what prickles the glands like vinegar—is not luxury but otherness. I have a particular weakness for the chunky, old-style blockbusters that sit in every kitchen, offering reams of advice that is seldom taken, or even required. Endlessly updated with new editions, these masterworks are doomed never to be up to date. Craig Claiborne's "New York Times Cook Book," which has slowly acquired the gravitas of Holy Writ, was first published in 1961. I found an early edition, and smiled at the hors-d'oeuvres suggestions that are arrayed for our delectation in the first section of the book: how to serve oysters on the half shell, how to serve caviar, how to serve foie gras. It was a time capsule of America in the late fifties and early sixties; it made me want to watch "Pillow Talk" all over again. With a sigh of regret, I turned to the latest edition (Harper & Row; $30). How would it start in the nineties? Char-grilled calamari with arugula and flat-leaf parsley? Stuffed snow peas à la Martha? Shiitake tarts? But no, there it was again: how to serve oysters on the half shell, etc. What was once an accurate index of national taste has now become a museum piece. It's the same story with Irma S. Rombauer and Marion Rombauer Becker's "The Joy of Cooking," which began life in 1931 and reads as if it had never got past 1945. Social historians should head straight for the "Pies and Pastries" section and check out the crusty jokes: "No wonder pictures of leggy starlets are called cheesecake!" Ba-boom.

"I don't know—somehow, when John Travolta says 'Look at me,' it's different."

Down below caviar, even farther down than cheesecake, there is a place where the joy of cooking gives way to the joy of not bothering to cook at all. Yet even here, on the ocean floor of *cuisine en bas*, among such primitive life forms as the Fried Peanut Butter and Banana Sandwich, there is food for thought. To discover this sandwich in Brenda Arlene Butler's "Are You Hungry Tonight? Elvis' Favorite Recipes" (Gramercy; $8.99) is to be transported, without warning, to an age of innocence. The book's final chapter offers readers the chance to re-create the giant six-tier wedding cake that Elvis and Priscilla cut together on that happy day in 1967: the words "Eleven pounds hydrogenated vegetable shortening (such as Sweetex or Crisco)" speak to me as directly, and as movingly, as the partridges that Renaudet called for in the early morning.

THERE are times when this need to look elsewhere—to reach into the ovens of another age, or another culture, and pull out whatever you can—grows from a well-fed fancy into a moral necessity. Hence the invaluable contribution of Elizabeth David, whose name remains as revered in England as that of M. F. K. Fisher in America. (Why do women make such great cookery writers? Partly, I suspect, because they realize that it is enough to be a great cook, whereas men, larded with pride in their own accomplishment, invariably go one step too far and try to be great *chefs*—a grander calling, though somehow less respectable, and certainly less responsive to human need.) Both David and Fisher were spurred to action by the Second World War: Fisher's "How to Cook a Wolf" was published in 1942, when food shortages were beginning to bite, and David's "A Book of Mediterranean Food" appeared in 1950, when England was still rationed, undernourished, and keen on suet.

Elizabeth David's mission was to find the modern equivalent of Renaudet's partridges, to resuscitate flagging and amnesiac palates with the prospect of unthinkable dishes. Such food had no need to be rich; it simply had to taste of something, to bear recognizable links to natural produce, and, most important, to be non-gray. Whether it ever saw the light of day, or the candlelight of evening, was beside the point; the mere promise of it, David herself confessed, was a form of nourishment. "Even if people could not very often make the dishes here described," she pointed out, "it was stimulating to think



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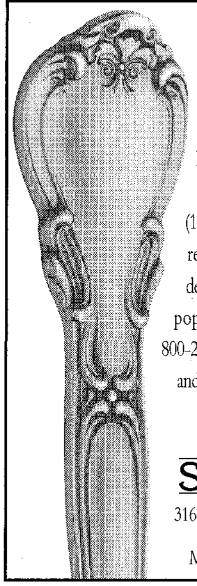
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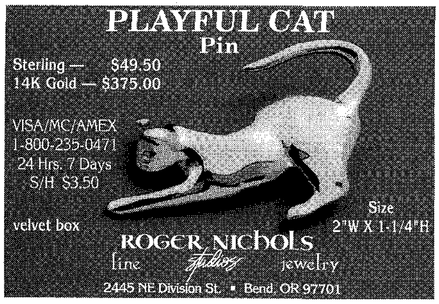
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about them." And so on the first page of "A Book of Mediterranean Food" she kicked off with *soupe au pistou* and its accompanying dollop of *aïllade*. The garlicky stink of Nice hit England full in the face, and the nation—or, at any rate, the middle classes—came back to life.

Nowadays, the situation is reversed. We know too much about food. Your principal obligation when you sit down at a restaurant in New York is to play it cool. Black spaghettini with cuttlefish and fennel tops? Been there. *Soupe au pistou*? Wake me up when it's over. In the past year, I have eaten both reindeer (a fun Christmas dish) and ostrich (better baked in sand, I guess), but they hardly count as exotic anymore. Cookbooks have followed the lead of restaurants and delicatessens: specialist works abound, the narrower the better. I gave up reading Sara Slavin and Karl Petzke's "Champagne: The Spirit of Celebration" (Chronicle; $22.95), a book devoted to cooking with and for champagne, at the point where it instructed me to "roll each cheese-coated grape in the garlic-almond mixture." Isn't there some kind of Grape Protection Society that should be fighting this stuff? As for "365 Ways to Cook Hamburger and Other Ground Meats," by Rick Rodgers (HarperCollins; $16.95), what can I say? Welcome to the most disgusting book on earth. It's not the dishes themselves that I object to—not even Ed Debevic's Burnt Meatloaf, or the Transylvanian Pork and Sauerkraut Bake—but the gruelling way in which one recipe after another resounds with the same mournful litany: "One pound ground round." Remember the wise words of M. F. K. Fisher: "The first thing to know about ground round steak is that it should not be that at all."

Far more cheering and plausible is Nick Malgieri's "How to Bake" (HarperCollins; $35), which runs for two hundred and seventy-six pages before it even gets to "Plain Cakes." Should you find the book a little too broad in scope, you could always play the sacred card and go for "The Secrets of Jesuit Breadmaking," by Brother Rick Curry, S.J. (HarperPerennial; $16.50). This alternates clear spiritual homilies with yeasty advice about cooling racks. Sometimes, with a brilliant flourish, Brother Curry kneads his twin passions into one phrase: "As we begin the most austere week in Christianity, tasty rich biscuits remind us that Jesus is coming." I suspect that such highly sophisticated reasoning may have been the downfall of Gerard Manley Hopkins, poet and Jesuit, who suffered what was reputed to be one of the worst cases of constipation in the nineteenth century.

If you really intend to be the star of your own cookbook, you need to watch out. (The finest cooks, such as Escoffier, are godlike, everywhere in the text yet nowhere to be seen.) Brother Curry, schooled in humility, gets it about right: when he says that his Loyola Academy Buttermilk Bread "goes great with peanut butter," we instinctively believe that he's plugging a good idea rather than himself. The trouble starts with celebrity cookbooks and tie-ins; try as I might, I cannot conceive of a time when I will want to concoct a meal from the pages of "The Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. Cookbook" or its literate successor, "Forrest Gump: My Favorite Chocolate Recipes" (both from Oxmoor House; $14.95). "Entertaining with Regis and Kathie Lee" (Hyperion; $19.95) is remarkable less for the quality of the cuisine than for the photographs of Kathie Lee, who seems to spend half her time with her mouth wide open, as if to catch any mouthfuls flying by. Then, there's Rosie Daley, whose food looks perfectly nice, but whose "In the Kitchen with Rosie" (Knopf; $14.95) might not have reached the best-seller lists were she not employed as a cook by Oprah Winfrey. It's kind of hard to concentrate on the ingredients, what with Oprah's cheerleading ringing out at regular intervals. "I have thrived on pasta. I can eat it every day and practically do." You'd never guess.

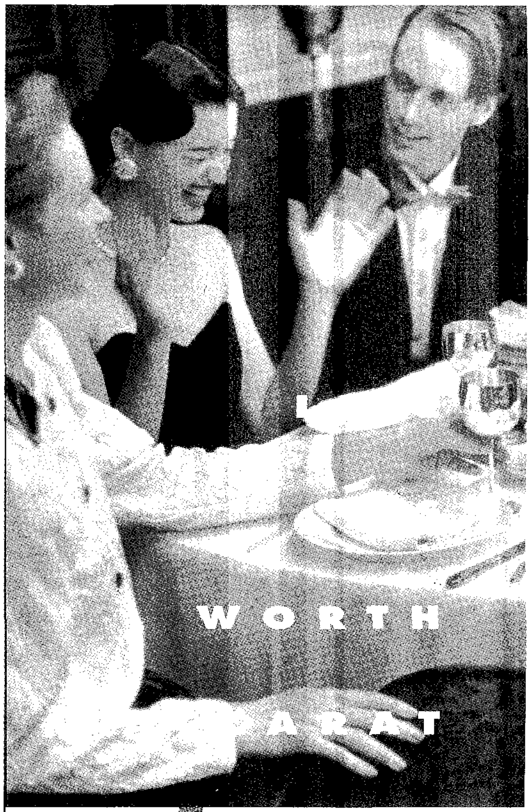
Whether such works can be relied upon in the kitchen is of little consequence. Cookbooks, it should be stressed, do not belong in the kitchen at all. We keep them there for the sake of appearances; occasionally, we smear their pages together with vibrant green glazes or crimson compotes, in order to delude ourselves, and any passing browsers, that we are practicing cooks; but, in all honesty, a cookbook is something that you read in the living room, or in the bathroom, or in bed. The purpose is not to nurture nightmares of suckling pig, or to lull ourselves into a fantasy of trimly bearded oysters, but simply to baste our rested brains with common sense, and with the prospect of common pleasures to come. Take this romantic interlude from " 'Tis the Season: A Vegetarian Christmas Cookbook" (Simon & Schuster; $30), by Nanette Blanchard: "Turn down the lights, light all the candles you can find, throw a log on the fire, turn up the music, and toast each other with a Sparkling Grape Goblet." Oh, oh, Nanette. On the other hand, what could be sweeter than to retire with "Smoke & Spice," by Cheryl Alters Jamison and Bill Jamison (Harvard Common Press; $14.95), whose High Plains Jerky would be an ornament to any barbecue? Those in search of distant horizons could always caress their senses with "The Art of Polish Cooking" (Pelican; $17.95), in which Alina Żerańska offers her triumphant recipe for "Nothing" Soup (*Zupa "Nic"*), adding darkly, "This is an all-time children's favorite."

If I could share a Sparkling Grape Goblet with anyone—not just any cook but any person in recorded history—it might well be with Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. Magistrate, mayor, violinist, judge, and ravenous slayer of wild turkeys during his visit to America, Brillat-Savarin is now remembered for "The Physiology of Taste," which was first published in 1825. There is a good paperback version, translated by Anne Drayton (Viking Penguin; $12.95), but devotees may wish to seek out the translation by M. F. K. Fisher herself; it has now been reissued in a luxurious new edition (Counterpoint; $45), with illustrations by Wayne Thiebaud. To say that "The Physiology of Taste" is a cookbook is like saying that Turgenev's "Sportsman's Sketches" is a guide to hunting. "When I came to consider the pleasures of the table in all their aspects, I soon perceived that something better than a mere cookery book might be made of such a subject," Brillat-Savarin writes. It is a perception that few have shared; the closest modern equivalent, perhaps, is in the work of A. J. Liebling, a man whose delicately gluttonous writings on food keep wandering off (when he can tear himself away) into such equally pressing areas as Paris, boxing, and sex. Brillat-Savarin, like Liebling, gives few recipes, though he muses on innumerable dishes, on the scientific reasons for their effect on the metabolism, and on the glow of sociable well-being that is their ideal result. He sprinkles anecdotes like salt, and he defines and defends *gourmandisme* ("It shows implicit obedience to the commands of the Creator"), following it through the various stages of delight and surfeit to its logical conclusion. There is a chapter on "The Theory of Frying" and a wonderful disquisition on death, embellished with gloomy good cheer: "I would recall the words of the dying Fontenelle, who on being asked what he could feel, replied: 'Nothing but a certain difficulty in living.' "

The lasting achievement of Brillat-Savarin is that he endowed living with a certain ease. Intricately versed in the difficulties of existence, he came to the unorthodox conclusion that a cookbook—a bastard form, but a wealthy, happy bastard—could offer the widest and most tender range of remedies. I'm not sure whether he knew how to fold the wings of a chicken akimbo, and if you'd handed him a snow pea and told him to stuff it he would have responded in kind; but it takes someone like Brillat-Savarin to remind us that cooking need not be the fraught, perfectionist, slightly paranoid struggle that it has latterly become. His love of food is bound up with a taste for human error and indulgence, and that is why "The Physiology of Taste" is still the most civilized cookbook ever written. I suspect that Brillat-Savarin might have been bemused by Martha Stewart, but that he would have got on just fine with Ed Debevic and his Burnt Meatloaf.

I sure wish that he had been on hand for my terrine of sardines and potatoes. There I was—apron on, gin in hand, closely following the recipe of the French chef Raymond Blanc. All went well until I got to the harmless words "a piece of cardboard." Apparently, I needed cardboard to lay on the terrine mold; the cardboard then had to be covered with "evenly distributed weights" for twelve hours. Weights? Cardboard? Twelve hours? They weren't listed with the ingredients. I had my sardines; I had my twenty capers and my freshly grated nutmeg; but I had no cardboard. Frankly, it would have been easier to kill a turtle.

That's the trouble with cookbooks. Like sex education and nuclear physics, they are founded on an illusion. They bespeak order, but they end in tears. ♦



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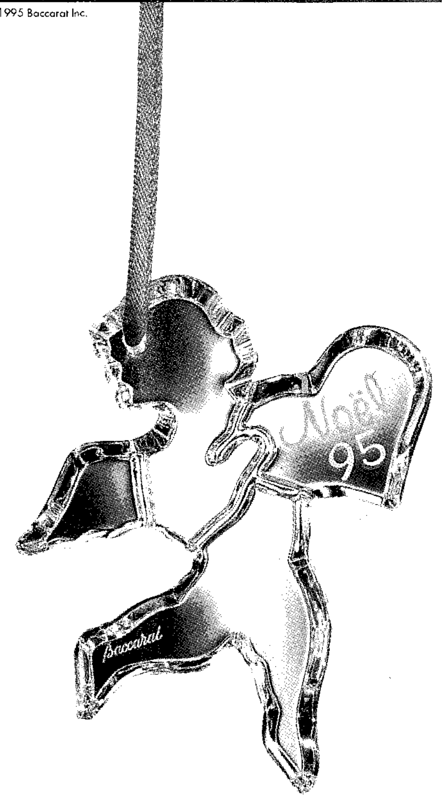

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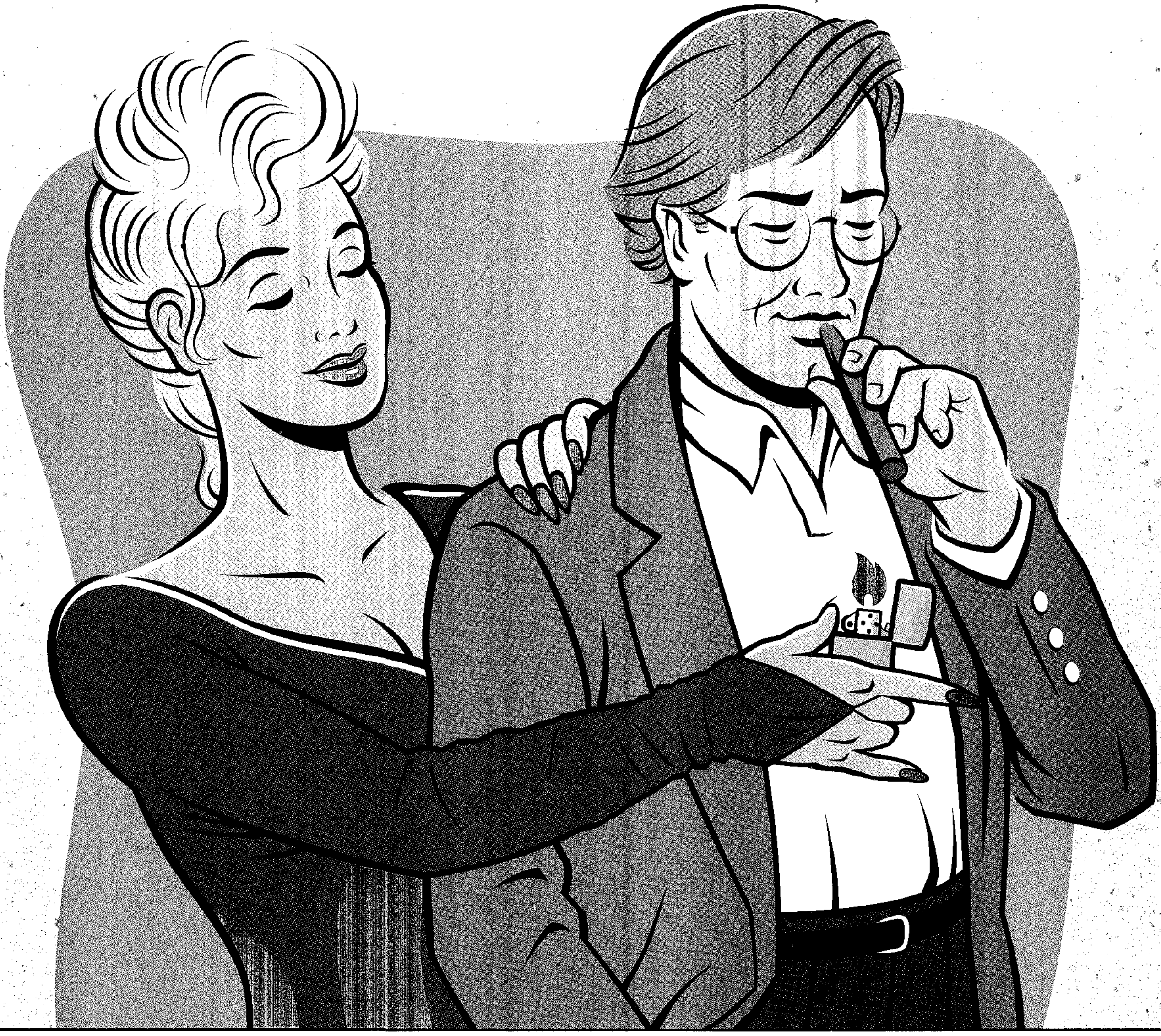

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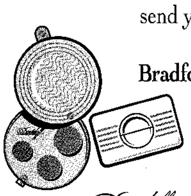

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As politically incorrect as Rudyard Kipling may have been in writing "The Betrothed," his ode to diffidence in choosing between the love of a good smoke and that of a woman, it underscores the extent of the passion men have for fine cigars, a passion that appears to be spreading as fast as tobacco plants in the Dominican Republic.

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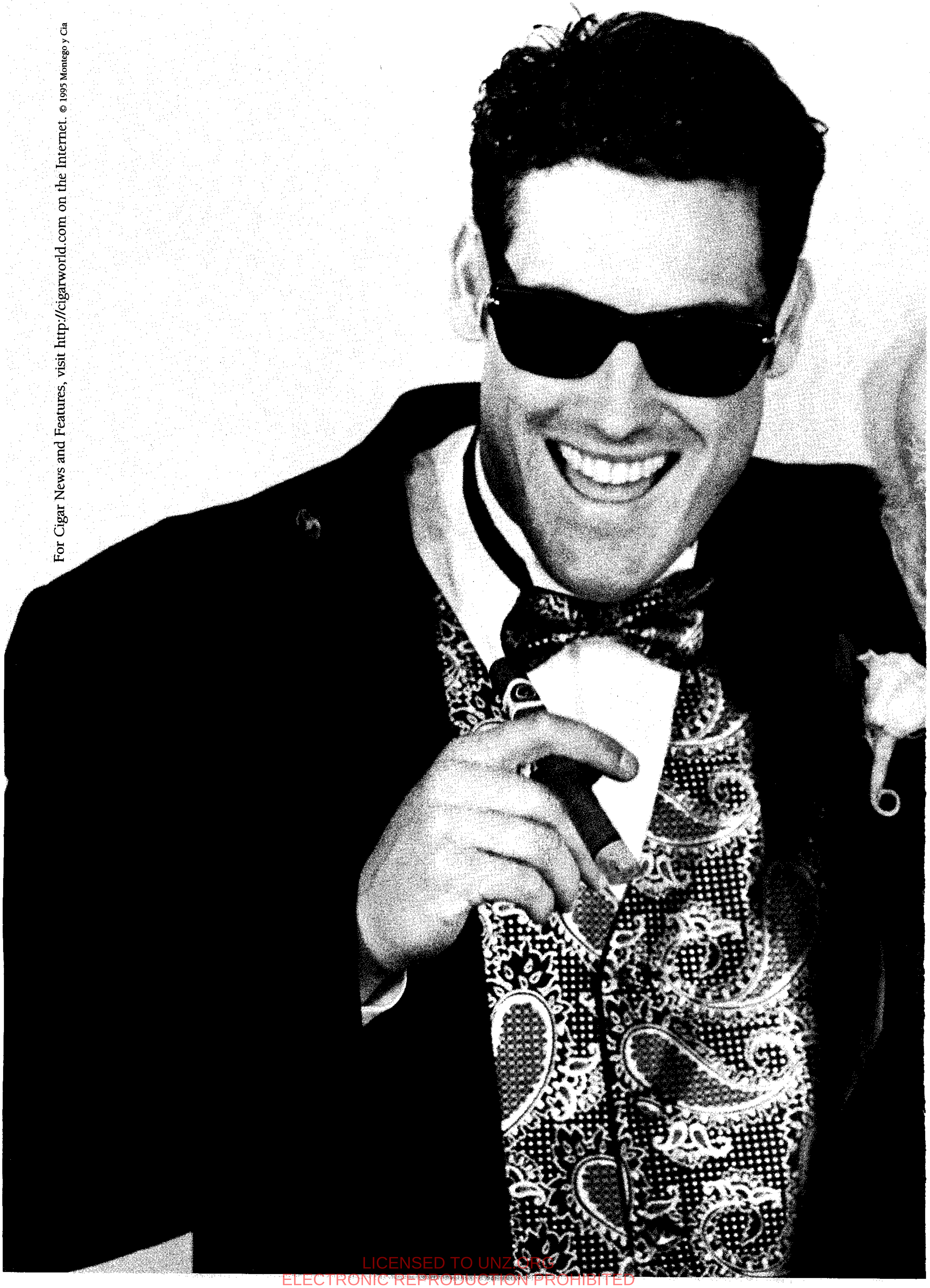

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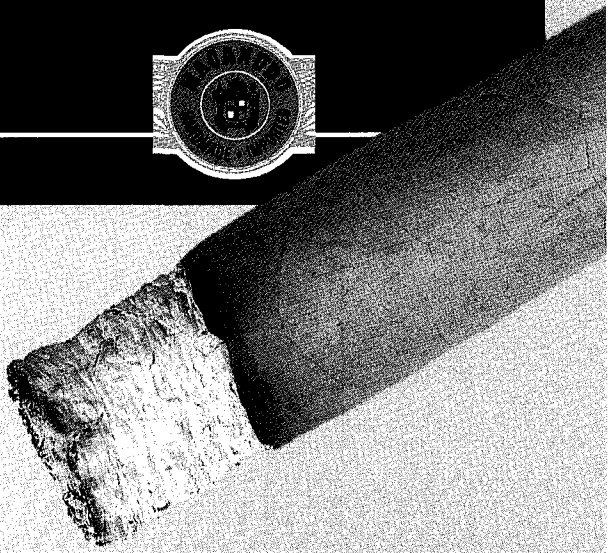

It's hard to disagree on true cigar taste.

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It must be said that the newfound fascination with cigars does not pertain exclusively to the male gender; women in increasing numbers are either enjoying a good cigar themselves or, at the least, turning tolerant of men who do. Indeed, so widespread has cigar smoking become among women that a recent newsletter published by The Cigar of the Month Club devoted its entire front page to the subject.

FROM THE BEGINNING...

While theories differ, it is generally accepted that tobacco as we know it was first grown and smoked in America, probably by native Americans close to the Yucatan peninsula, according to Anwer Bati, in his book *The Cigar Companion*. Even the word "tobacco" writes Bati, is believed to be a corruption of the Caribbean island named Tobago. Following his explorations to the Americas, Christopher Columbus is said to have brought the idea of smoking tobacco back to Europe. It caught on, particularly in Spain and France, where the pastime became a sign of wealth, since only those of means could afford the new import. In fact, the word nicotine is derived from the 15th-century French ambassador to Portugal, Jean Nicot, whom Bati contends introduced the smoking habit to French society. Nicot's counterpart in Britain was Sir Walter Raleigh, who led the way in establishing a good smoke, probably by pipe, as a status symbol.

It is to Spain and King Ferdinand VII that we owe the invention of the cigar, with the earliest known ones made in Seville from Cuban tabacco seed in the 18th century. They were called "segars" (which is derived from the Mayan word "sikar" for smoking) by French and British soldiers returning from the Napoleonic Wars. It was these men who were largely responsible for creating the original cigar craze in England and France.

One of the best known progenitors of cigar smoking in England was the Duke of Windsor (later Edward VIII), whose mother, Queen Victoria, frowned on the habit her son enthusiastically endorsed. She most likely did not care much for his sartorial adventurousness either.

> *Here's to you and*
> *your cigar; light it*
> *well and the*
> *Recording Angel will*
> *have less to do.*
>
> —M. E. FLAHERTY

The Cigar of the Month Club offers a selection of outstanding cigars every month, along with results from members' tasting notes on the previous month's specialties.

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Stateside, the popularity of cigars did not come into its own until the Civil War period. Indeed, the eventually victorious Ulysses S. Grant was photographed so often with a cigar between his lips it seemed almost to be an extra appendage he had grown. A bit of trivia: the word "stogie" is derived from Conestoga, a town in Pennsylvania where long, thick cigars were first manufactured.

THE QUALITY WITHIN...

With so many cigars out there, finding those of quality is no easy task, and it helps to know as much as one can about how to recognize fine cigars as opposed to, well, less-than-fine ones. Essentially, better cigars are made up of three basic components: filler, binder, and wrapper. Handmade cigars will also have a "cap" at the end, which is a round circle the size of a dime formed from the wrapper trimmings and meticulously applied by hand. Machine-made cigars almost never have this feature.

The outer wrapper leaf of fine-quality cigars, often the most expensive part, should be smooth, with no veins, blemishes or bumps—known in tobacco parlance as "tooth."

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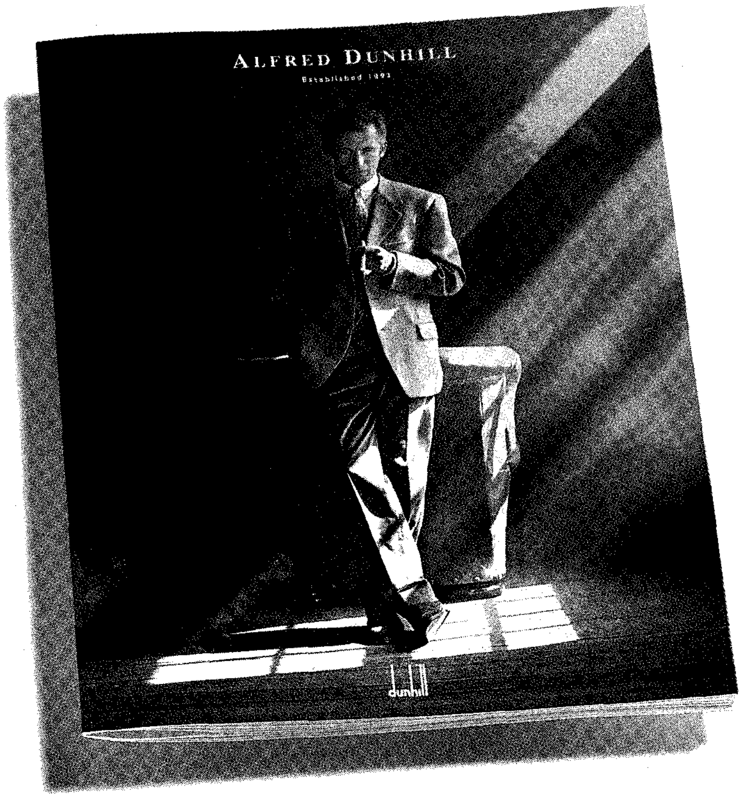

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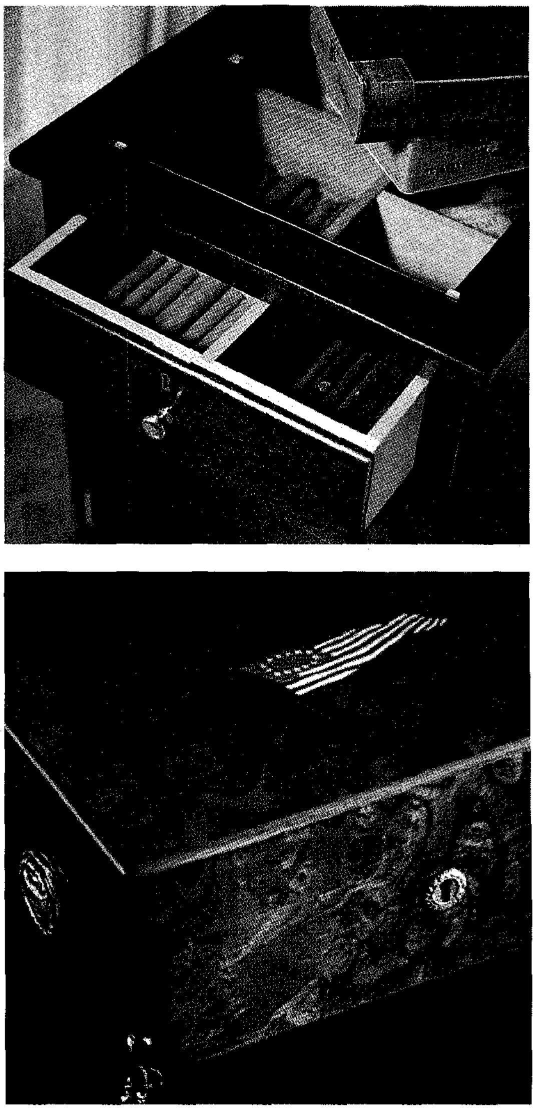
A QUESTION OF TASTE...

Enjoying a fine cigar is a sensual pleasure that goes beyond mere puffing; it is an experience, a luxury that is decidedly more dimensional, involving sight, touch, smell, taste and even sound.

After removing a cigar from a humidor inspect it carefully, since the look and condition of the wrapper can be revealing—it can say a great deal about how the cigar will taste and enhance anticipation. The look of the cigar is part of the aesthetic of smoking. By rolling and pressing the cigar gently between the fingers, the relative smoothness and subtle oily character of the cigar can be felt. Holding it up to one's ear while rolling between the fingers allows one to detect the moisture and subtle sponginess of both the wrapper and the filler. A cigar with little elasticity in this regard needs more time in the humidor. Conversely, a cigar with cracks or ripples in the wrapper means it has been exposed to over-humidification or excessive dryness; these can affect the cigar's performance. Any inner damage to the filler will cause the cigar to smoke unevenly. Finally, after the cigar is lit (more on that later), inspect the ash—popular wisdom contends that a whiter ash is better than a gray one in determining a cigar's quality and condition.

Generally speaking, the larger the ring gauge or size, the stronger or richer the cigar will be. Larger cigars also will smoke a bit more smoothly and heat up less



Accessories for storing cigars can be elegant and luxurious, as in the cordovan cigar cabinet, above, with glass top that holds 1,000 cigars and the burled walnut humidor, below, with American flag inlay and gold pedestal legs.

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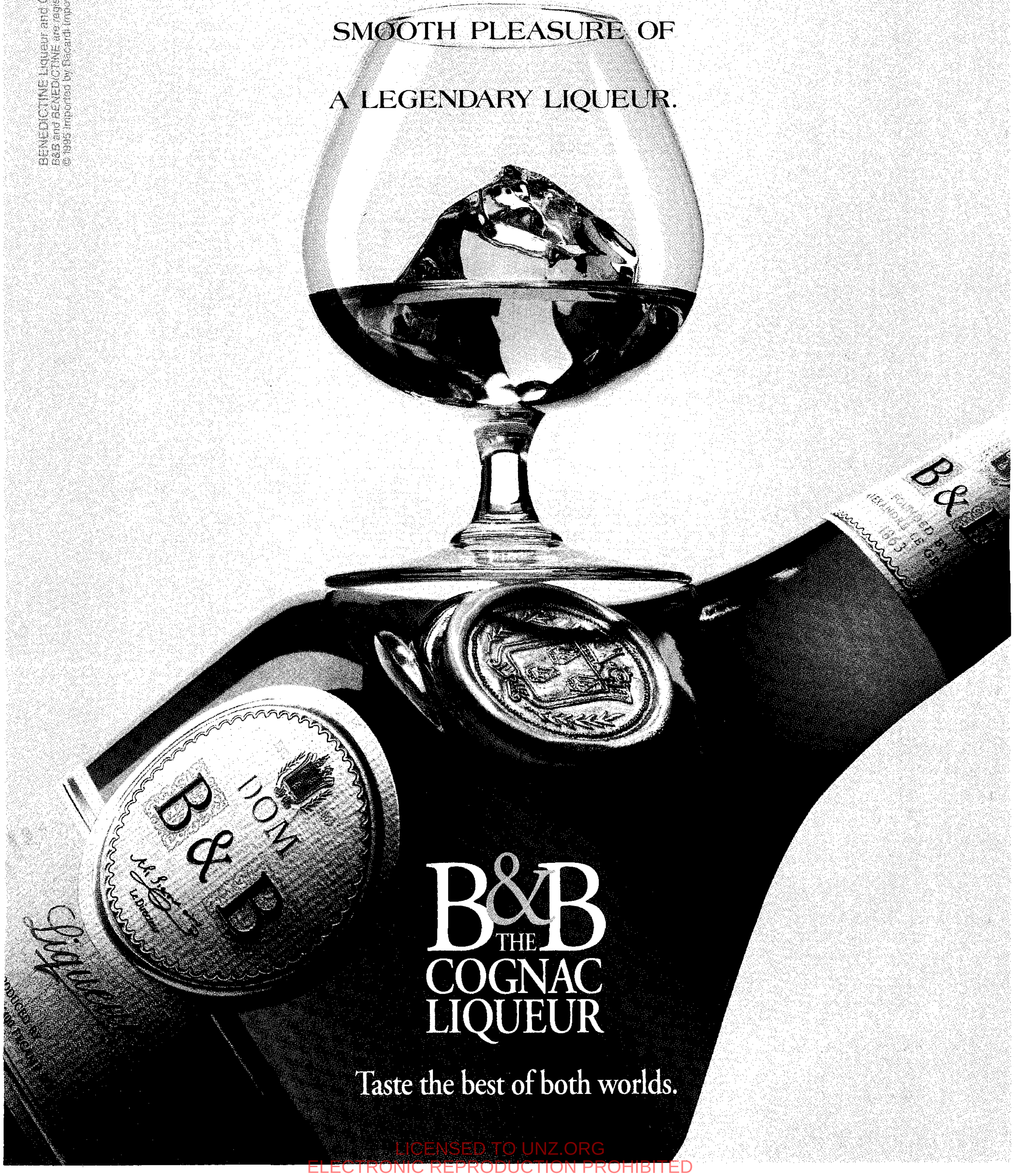

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frequently than smaller ring sizes. Certain experts maintain that these large size cigars are better made since there is more ligero leaf and the leaves are almost always longer, which is why the corporate mogul, being a seasoned smoker, is always depicted with the biggest cigar one could imagine.

The novice is well advised, however, to begin with smaller ring size cigars and then move up to larger sizes slowly. Certain cigar makers have a reputation for producing mild cigars, regardless of the size, while others prefer to market only those that are at once robust and flavorful and hardly for the squeamish. One rule may apply though: save those big robustos for after dinner; milder ones are best enjoyed before.

All of these factors are part and parcel of enjoying the experience of a fine cigar and ensure that the proper flavors and aromas are coming through. As for whether there are hints of hazelnut, espresso and nutmeg...that's for individual palates to decide.

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MAKING THE CUT...

Snipping the end of a cigar should be a simple task, yet even here there are rules and methods worth getting familiar with. There are many ways of cutting a cigar and each is perfectly acceptable, as long as a clean, level cut is made not too high on the shoulder, leaving about $^{1}/_{8}$-inch of the cap. The guillotine-style cutter, either single or double-sided, the easiest and second-cheapest method known to man, snips the cap and leaves the largest hole, providing the highest mixture of cooler air and smoke. Proper cigar "scissors" take some practice, since getting a clean, even cut is more difficult than it seems. As elegant as many of the scissors on the market may be, they are less efficient than the guillotine.

Keep me at hand
and as my fumes arise,
You'll find ajar
the gates of paradise.

—Anon.

Finally, there are one's teeth, which invariably leave a ragged cut but get the job done with nary a cent invested.

As for lighting, this too is somewhat of a ritual that should be followed. The best method is to hold the cigar horizontally over a flame with the fire not quite touching the cigar, rotating the end so that it is charred evenly all around. Then place the cigar, still horizontal, between the lips and draw slowly while turning, which will ignite the end. A gentle blow on the end will ensure an even burn. One final note: Always light a cigar with a proper lighter, such as the classic Zippo, perhaps using a cedar lighting straw, or with

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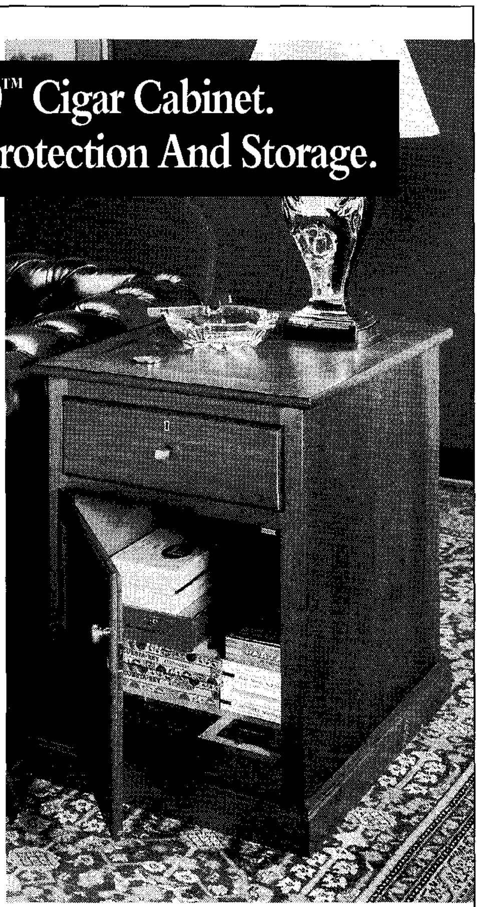

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lengthy cigar matches sold in better shops such as Alfred Dunhill or Davidoff.

PRESERVING ONE'S INVESTMENT...

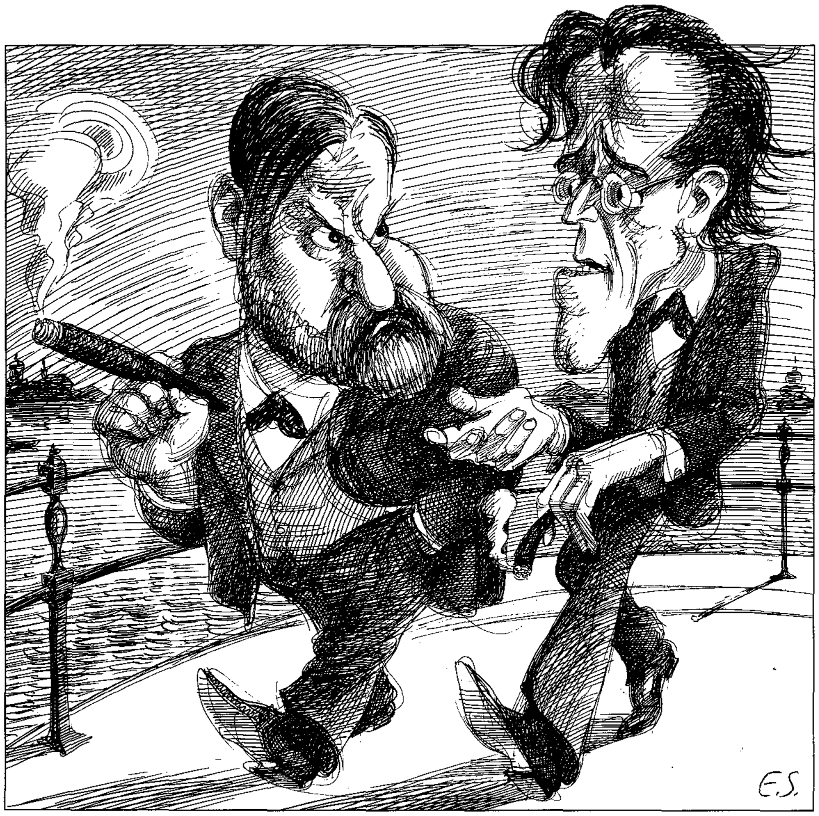
While $10 is a small price to pay for two hours of luxury, the passion for cigars is no small undertaking. It is a pleasurable pursuit that can get expensive in a relatively short amount of time, at least as far as quality is concerned. For this reason, along with a few others less pragmatic, the neophyte cigar lover is well-advised to invest in a proper humidor for storing and preserving his handmade cigars.

For elegantly firing up a favorite robusto or panatela, Zippo's engine-turned sterling silver lighter, above, remains an American classic. *Below:* One of the most recognized names in fine quality, handmade cigars in any ring size is Macanudo, the cigar lover's cigar.

According to The Cigar of the Month Club, the ideal condition for storing cigars is precisely 72 degrees Fahrenheit at 73 percent relative humidity. Of course, this is an ideal; five degrees deviance either way is perfectly acceptable provided there are no major temperature swings.

The best humidors, such as those made by Dunhill and Davidoff, have insides made of cedar, which enhances the aging process best, with seams that are perfectly squared and fitted. There should be no visible gaps or glue between seams or joints and the rim of the lid must be constructed so that it is uniformly tight but not so tight that a hint of air cannot get in (an airtight lid would lead to mustiness that could destroy the cigars).

For serious-minded cigar lovers and collectors, companies such as Vigilant are hand-crafting elegant cigar cabinets for storing



E.S.

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boxes of cigars as well as singles; these cabinets fit easily into a room's decor. In cities such as New York, high-end shops such as Dunhill maintain cigar "keeps" for their better customers.

What wonder if I envy not
the rich, the giddy,
and the proud

Contented in this quiet
spot to blow my
after dinner cloud?

—HENRY S. LEIGH

The love of fine cigars has swept across America, as witnessed by the multitude of "Smoker" nights cropping up in cities everywhere. It is a universal fraternity of sorts, with The Cigar of the Month Club and the Ludovic Baine Cigar Society established to preserve the luxurious, if somewhat hedonist, pursuit of fine cigars. The Cigar of the Month Club is planning a number of gala smokers next year, including a possible event at the Cuban embassy in New York, where selections of Havanas most assuredly will be part of the festivities. The Ludovic Baine Cigar Society, a regal-sounding name if there ever was one, goes beyond cigar of the month selections to include offering members special gift package ideas for any and all occasions, from a new birth to bar mitzvahs.

One of the many advantages of membership in cigar clubs such as the Ludovic Baine Cigar Society is the opportunity to sample rare and hard-to-find cigars.

If he lived among us today, Rudyard Kipling most certainly would be a member of these new men's clubs devoted to cigars. Indeed, the images are easily conjured: Kipling drawing on a Macanudo Churchill at one of the club get-togethers, lifting a snifter of B&B brandy and chanting to anyone who would listen..."A woman is only a woman, but a good cigar is a Smoke." Nods all around. Political correctness be damned. It's the stuff of legend.

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PARIS JOURNAL

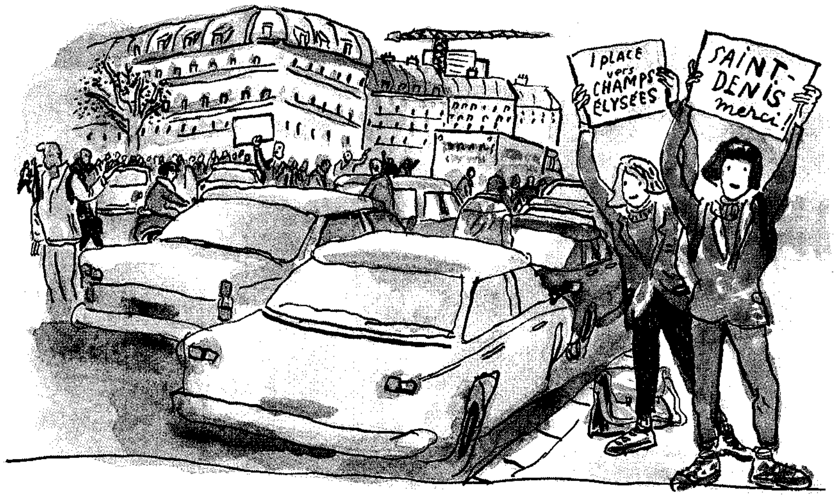
STATUS QUO FOREVER

Why are the French so pleased with their strike?

BY ADAM GOPNIK

DECEMBER 6

THE "generalized" strike that the big French labor federations have called—making a fastidious distinction between what they're doing now and the "general" strike that they may yet get around to—has shut down Paris. The commuter and intercity trains haven't run for two weeks, not even the T.G.V., the famous fast train between Paris and the South. The Métro is closed down (the crickets who live beneath the rails are said to be perishing for lack of the heat they normally get from the friction of the trains running above, and their plight has become a minor cause célèbre here). There are no buses, and the post office has stopped delivering the mail. Even *le Paris touristique* has been snapped shut. The Ritz has had a drop-off in occupancy of twenty-five per cent (at the height of the terrorist bombing campaign, a few months ago, the rate was near normal, which suggests that the rich would rather risk being blown to bits than have a hard time finding a taxi). The Louvre, like a city under siege, has been struggling to stay open and can guarantee only a narrow access corridor, leading directly from the entrance to the "Mona Lisa." The government has even commandeered the *bateaux-mouches*—those ugly, flat-bottomed open-air tourist boats that ply the tourist sights year-round—and has turned them into ferry boats to get commuters up and down the Seine.


I PLACE vers CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES
SAINT-DENIS merci!

This strike is chiefly a Parisian event, but if you close down the Métro and the Gare du Nord you have effectively "paralyzed France."

GERARD NICOLAS

I think that I only really began to grasp just how serious the strike was when the chickens stopped rotating at the outdoor market in my neighborhood. Several poultry merchants there keep chickens and *coquelets* and rabbits and pheasants spitted and broiling on outdoor rotisseries all through the year, even in August and in the quiet days after Christmas. One afternoon a few days into the strike, I walked over to the market to check on the progress of a turkey I had ordered from one of the *rôtisseurs*, to be sent up from the country for a belated Thanksgiving, and I noticed that he had unspitted all his birds and turned off the grill. This seemed to me one of those signs that reporters abroad are supposed to treat as portents ("It has long been said in the bazaars that when the chickens stop turning the government will fall"), and as I approached to ask what he was doing he gestured grimly in the direction of the Boulevard Saint-Germain.

"*Ça commence*," he said grimly. It's be-

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RANDOM HOUSE

ginning—though what, exactly, was beginning I wasn't sure. "The turkey, it's still on its way?" I asked, with the stupid inconsequence common to people caught up in revolutions. ("*Rien*," Louis XVI noted in his diary the day the Bastille was stormed.) He shook his head gravely, implying, I thought for a moment, that the strike might have spread to the fowl, too. Then he gestured again toward the boulevard.

For about ten solid blocks, on each side of the Boulevard Saint-Germain a row of tourist buses was parked—which, considering the severity with which the cops normally enforce the no-parking regulations, was in itself a near-insurrectionary sight. The buses bore on their windshields notices indicating where their journeys had begun—Lyons, Grenoble, Bordeaux—and, in their side windows, little stickers saying "F.O.," for Force Ouvrière, or Workers' Force. (Despite the militant name, it is the more moderate of the big French labor federations.) Inside, the bus drivers looked bored and sleepy after the long trip in from the provinces. But between the two rows of buses thousands of F.O. members, from all across France, were marching up the boulevard, three or four abreast. Then came a rear guard of students armed with batons and occasional bricks. The noise, oddly, was confined, cozily insulated by the parked coaches—a revolution taking place in a bus depot. Farther east on the boulevard, beyond the buses, the French riot police were lined up and waiting, in helmets and shields. There wasn't any violence then, and there hasn't been too much since, but around that time it began to seem that the French were trying on, if only for a moment, long-discarded revolutionary roles, albeit in a slightly unreal setting—strikers taking buses to the revolution, students relearning the lore of the heaved cobblestone.

THE strike had begun, on Friday, November 24th, as a one-day job action, led by the railroad workers. The Juppé government was still in a state of self-congratulatory, mildly Gingrichian delight over the austerity measures that it had announced to reform the expensive social-security system of the French state. The *cheminots*, as the railroad workers are called, hated this idea, because a lot of money is put directly into their pension fund by the government—an outright subsidy, which makes the railroad workers less employees of a profit-seeking enterprise than subsidized functionaries of a state cultural treasure, like members of the Comédie Française. (Although the train system loses money, it is one of the glories of France.) Perhaps the government doubted whether the *cheminots* could command much sympathy, since their specific grievance seemed absurdly small (many of them would no longer be able to retire at fifty at full pay), and since the unions have receded as drastically in France in the past fifteen years as they have in America, maybe more so. One in every ten French workers still belongs to a union, but most of the unionized workers are ensconced for life in the public sector or in subsidized, state-run enterprises. What the unions have lost in numbers, though, they have gained in freedom to maneuver and in symbolic force. They are no longer the vanguard of the revolution. Now they are the shock troops of the bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile, a strike by university students, which had begun outside Paris, came to town, too. The students wanted smaller classes and more money, and the government didn't foresee any possible sharing of interests between them and the *cheminots;* what's more, it didn't see how a student strike could claim center stage in a country that has suffered consistently from ten per cent unemployment. Yet the government underestimated the extraordinary hold that the word "student" has on the French imagination—a little like the hold the word "farmer" has on Americans. In fact, the phrase "student movement" has in France much the same magic that the phrase "family farm" has in America, conjuring up an idealized past, even for people who never took part in a student movement or lived on a family farm. For a week, the students and the *cheminots* took turns working over the Chirac-Juppé government, like a veteran tag-team-wrestling pair going against a couple of beardless innocents. They did such a good job that more groups began to jump into the ring. First, the Métro workers went out, and then the postal workers, and then the employees of France Télécom. No one knows who may go next.

Though the strike has developed a quasi-revolutionary momentum, it doesn't have anything like a quasi-revolutionary ideology: the slogan of the government functionaries at the heart of the strike is, essentially, "Status quo forever." The tone is entirely middle class; it suggests a vast petit-bourgeois ghost dance, trying to summon up, by its fervor and intensity, a certainty that the future will be like the "*trentes glorieuses*"—the glorious thirty years of French prosperity that ended in the late seventies. That is why even French people who don't belong to unions support the strike: a poll taken a week into the strike showed that just over sixty per cent of them were sympathetic to it.

A few days after the demonstration, I went back to the *rôtisseur* to see how the turkey was getting along on its way into town. "It does not look good," he said. "The strike prevents him from moving."

"Was he planning to take the T.G.V.?" I asked.

ALTHOUGH workers and students are striking throughout France, the strike is chiefly a Parisian event. That doesn't make it any less national, since France is a completely centralized country. To achieve in America the effect that the strikers have achieved here, it would be necessary to shut down simultaneously the New York subway, the Washington post office, and the Santa Monica freeway. These weeks have been unusually cold, and that has made the troubles of the strike more difficult. The strike has even produced an iconography of endurance: lots of pictures of bicyclists and rollerbladers and sailors, carrying on. But in fact the iconography is a little misleading. More typical sights are the endless *bouchons*, or traffic jams, which have made a twenty-minute trip from the Étoile to the Place de Clichy last four hours. On the great boulevards and avenues, there is a constant press of cars and people, marches one day and solid, immovable traffic jams the next. But if you walk only a couple of blocks away, in any direction, the city looks especially beautiful, and you can have it to yourself. Despite the strike, all the Christmas decorations are up—shiny red and gold ribbon and green garlands draped like bunting around the display windows of the boutiques. Since almost everyone is busy not getting anywhere in a car, you can be all alone with the gleaming glass storefronts and the

Christmas garlands and the sight of your own breath.

The motorcyclists have solved the traffic problem by giving up the streets and simply driving on the sidewalks. As you stroll along the boulevard, you suddenly discover a Harley-Davidson bearing down on you at high speed from among the plane trees. The motorcyclists, who would rather run over a few pedestrians than give up their hogs, are more truly Parisian than the wan in-line skaters, since the French attitude toward any crisis is not to soldier through it but just to pretend that it isn't happening. (It was in Paris, after all, that Picasso and Sartre sat in a café for four years pretending that the Germans weren't there.)

A deeper and more dramatic version of this national habit of pretending that things haven't happened is what has shaped the strike. What the French strikers want to ignore, at least according to their critics, are the economic facts of the end of the twentieth century: "global capital," the "modern service-based economy," the "tough new competitive conditions of the twenty-first century"—all of which, the critics say, can be dealt with only by a more "flexible" labor market. When are these people going to grow up and face reality? seems to be the exasperated question that others in Europe are asking. What the French feel is that for the past half century they have done pretty well by *not* facing reality—or, anyway, by facing it for one moment and then turning their backs on it for another, in a kind of endless inspired whirl through history. France is a uniquely lovely and supple place to live, and there is a reasonable suspicion here that the British and the Americans and the Germans are trying to hustle the French into what is called "a liberal paradise," but what no one here is quite convinced is so paradisiacal. Among the non-unionized, petit-bourgeois strike sympathizers, in particular, there is an intransigent and rather admirable level of temperamental resistance to the notion of "reforming" France to suit the global economy. Even Bernard Thibault, the secretary-general of the *cheminots'* union, said not long ago that he was willing to negotiate but that his bottom line was "Citizens must never be transported like merchandise."

In France, of course, not even the merchandise is transported like merchandise. When the turkey arrived at last, a week after the strike began, I got an excited call inviting me to come and see it, and when I arrived the *rôtisseur*, showing it off, pointed out to me how different it was from any bird in an American supermarket. It wasn't frozen, pumped full of cooking oil, or raised in a shed. The bird was supposed to have composed what amounted to a suicide note. "I was raised like a savage, in the forest of the Landes," the turkey's last will and testament began. "I fed on pure corn, wandered in the open air, and slept at night alone in the trees. . . ."

We talked about the strike—the *rôtisseur* seemed to have the same ambivalent sympathies as most other Frenchmen—and I sensed then that he believed that somehow the *cheminots'* strike would help him keep out the frozen turkeys, and the supermarkets they sit in, and the big chains that own the supermarkets. This belief may be as false as the belief that a ghost dance could raise the dead and bring back the buffalo, but it is no less fervently held.

The only things that have been working perfectly during the strike are what I suppose have to be called the instruments of global capitalism. The worldwide courier services are still picking up packages and sending them out overnight across the ocean; faxes buzz and communicate; and the one worker who seemed to make it nonchalantly through the streets to our house was the cable-TV installer, who hooked us up so that we could watch the strike on CNN. It's that anxious-making globalized economy that the strikers are responding to, however incoherently.

Everyone here likes to compare what is going on now with what went on in '68. The real point may be that while that was, in retrospect, essentially a cultural revolution in the guise of a political one, '95 seems, so far, to be a political revolution in the form of a cultural ritual—the big student-and-worker strike—that isn't really appropriate for it. It isn't appropriate because a strike, by its nature, is unpredictably disruptive, while the emotions behind this one are deeply conservative. The strike is one more cry of the heart from people who felt blessed for a long time and now feel threatened. The turkey, not quite incidentally, was so much better than any other turkey I have ever eaten that it might have been an entirely different kind of bird. ♦

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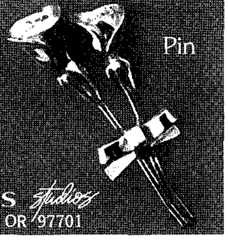
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LIFE AND LETTERS

PAINTING OUT CARRINGTON

In real life, there was more to Dora Carrington than just Lytton Strachey.

BY FRANCES SPALDING

WHEN Dora Carrington took her own life, at the age of thirty-eight, she left few obvious tokens of immortality. As a painter, she had exhibited little, belonged to no group, and coined no eye-catching style; her paintings seemed destined to age quietly in the homes of her friends and relatives. At the time of her death, in 1932, her life seemed merely a succession of botched relationships, strung, like misshapen beads, along the thread of her devotion to the homosexual writer Lytton Strachey. Carrington had wanted her ashes to be buried in the garden of the house they had shared, but thirty years later nobody could recollect whether her wish had been fulfilled. Her life and reputation had drifted into obscurity.

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Today, sixty-three years after her death, she has achieved renown: this fall, an exhibition of her work was shown at the Barbican Art Gallery, in London, while Emma Thompson re-created her likeness onscreen, in the Christopher Hampton film "Carrington." Carrington is attracting attention for many reasons, not least because the current anxiety about the breakdown of traditional patterns of cohabitation arouses fresh interest in her ability to find meaning in a deeply unconventional relationship. Perhaps the most bizarre development in the story of her life was her willingness to marry the man Strachey loved, Ralph Partridge, in order to maintain a precariously balanced, mostly chaste ménage à trois. Carrington eventually kept Ralph's affection by ceding him to Frances Marshall, a woman he had fallen in love with. But there was no divorce, no sudden termination of commitment: folded within this difficult situation lay the kind of love that does not alter when it alteration finds.

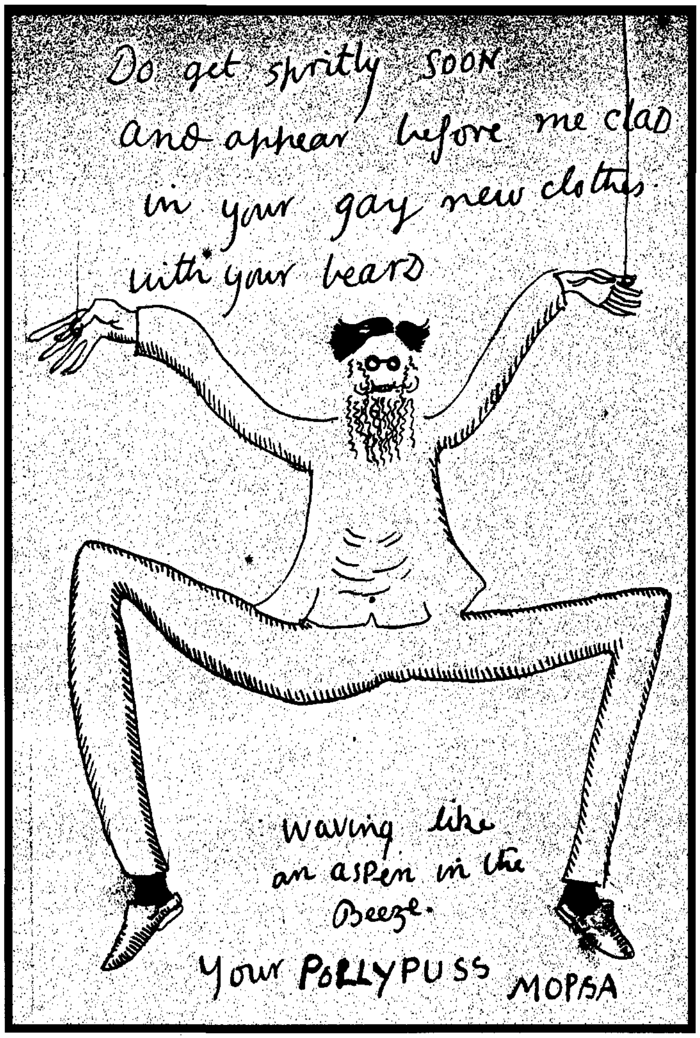
THE reawakening of interest in Carrington began with her letters, which, exhumed from attics and the backs of cupboards, unleashed her voice: "So many people alive who one doesn't know, so many wonders past which one finds everyday, and then the things to come—oh the wonder of it all," she wrote, at twenty-three, to a painter friend. One of the first to dip into these letters was Frances Partridge, who had married Ralph after Carrington's death and was widowed in 1960. Two years later, she was in Spain, visiting the writer Gerald Brenan, one of Carrington's lovers, when he produced three fat packets of her letters. Frances read far into the night. "I'm glad I did," she noted in her diary. "I became fascinated afresh by her personality—something close to genius—which poured itself out so freely in these long, original, poetical and amusing letters."

During the mid-sixties, the layers of time and neglect were disturbed further by Michael Holroyd. In his two-volume biography of Strachey, which appeared in 1967 and 1968, emerged the story of Carrington's profound love for him. Holroyd's research caused Carrington's old friends to reread her letters, and David Garnett published a selection, together with passages from her diaries, in 1970. Her brother, Noel Carrington, also took up her cause, and, in 1978, produced a small book on her paintings. In 1989, a comprehensive biography, by Gretchen Gerzina, appeared, and last year saw the publication of Jane Hill's monograph on Carrington's art. The Carrington industry needed only a filmmaker to translate this cult figure into a household name.

And yet, as the focus sharpens, it sometimes feels as if we are looking at Carrington through the wrong end of the telescope, for her coming into view has been accompanied by a simultaneous dwindling. Certain aspects of her life are now well known, while others tend to be overlooked. In the movie her bisexuality has been left out, and there is little evidence of the internal creative struggle that caused her to paint. Though Strachey's subtle and difficult character is brilliantly portrayed, Carrington—blame the script, the director, the actress, or whom you will—remains puzzling and inexplicable.

Her complicated personality is in danger of being subsumed into a tragic love story, for the film is simply following received opinion in tethering her tightly to Strachey. The fact that she chose not to go on living after his death encourages this view, which was first put forward by Garnett in his introduction to her letters. He bluntly declared that her relationship with Strachey was what made her fascinating, and in his selection he focussed on recipients within Bloomsbury, excluding some of her artist friends, and omitting all the letters written prior to 1915, the year she met Lytton.

Carrington had in fact made a reputation for herself before her association with Strachey began. Soon after entering the Slade School of Fine Art, in 1910, at the age of seventeen, she threw off her conventional, middle-class upbringing, dropped her first name ("I dislike the Victorian sentimentality of 'Dora,' " she wrote), and became Carrington, *tout court*. At a time when young women signalled their arrival at adulthood by putting up their hair, she cut hers off, becoming one of the first "cropheads" (a term coined by Virginia Woolf). A fellow-student, Paul Nash, who became a leading modernist, recalled that she was "a conspicuous and popular figure" at the Slade. Two young men—Mark Gertler and C. R. W. Nevinson—fell deeply in love with her.



Strachey adored Carrington's letters. They were the key to both her rediscovery and her coöpting by Bloomsbury legend. Carrington the "crophead" (opposite) in 1911.

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She was, even as a student, a peculiar mix of naïveté and sophistication. ("You are like a tin of mixed biscuits," the young poet Iris Tree told her.) Her cropped hair, plain dresses, and habit of walking with her feet turned in made her look awkward and vulnerable. Yet at the same time she was painting with great assurance, becoming a prize-winning exponent of the famous Slade School method. Whereas students at the Royal Academy Schools labored over carefully shaded drawings of antique casts, the Slade's professors encouraged a swifter, more decisive use of line, in front of live models. Many artists who emerged as leading figures in the interwar years trained at the Slade, even though, as in other English institutions, respect for custom had gradually stymied its capacity for change. Carrington's period there coincided with the burst of excitement caused by Roger Fry's two Post-Impressionist exhibitions, held in 1910 and 1912. But the strong color and elliptical use of space in the work of van Gogh, Gauguin, and Matisse contradicted the Slade emphasis on correct observation. Carrington, unlike the Bloomsbury painters, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, did not experiment with unmodified color and angular compositions. A process of assimilation did slowly occur, however. The qualities that make one of her early paintings, "The Boot Boy," so fine, with its honeyed flesh tones and subdued Old Masterish mood, later gave way to a far more original and direct manner. Her 1916 portrait of Lytton Strachey reading, his large hands holding a heavy book close to his face, has a startling intimacy: the painting breathes a concentration similar to that brought to the act of reading.

Ultimately, what Post-Impressionism did for Carrington was to license trust in her own vision. She had a passionate love of nature, and her most arresting images are landscapes. These, though they are freed from the tyranny of naturalism, simultaneously point up her divergence from Post-Impressionism. "Hill in Snow at Hurstbourne Tarrant," with its luminous coloring and minute detail, and "Farm at Watendlath," with its poetic intensity, align her more readily with the Pre-Raphaelites. Her "Tidmarsh Mill" has often been so wanly reproduced that visitors to the Barbican exhibition were un-prepared for its coloristic strength—the glowing vermillions in the roof offsetting the mottled sky, the livid greens in the landscape, and the two black swans floating on the river.

Like Stanley Spencer, her contemporary at the Slade, Carrington conjoined a descriptive style with a very personal point of view. She could not adjust to the more extreme implications of Post-Impressionism and showed no interest in abstraction. She remained torn between the old and the new—too advanced to exhibit with the New English Art Club, yet uninterested in avant-garde theories. After she painted a portrait of Lady Strachey, she observed, "I see I shall never fit in any 'school.' I am not modern enough for the French style, and too clumsy to become a New Englisher."

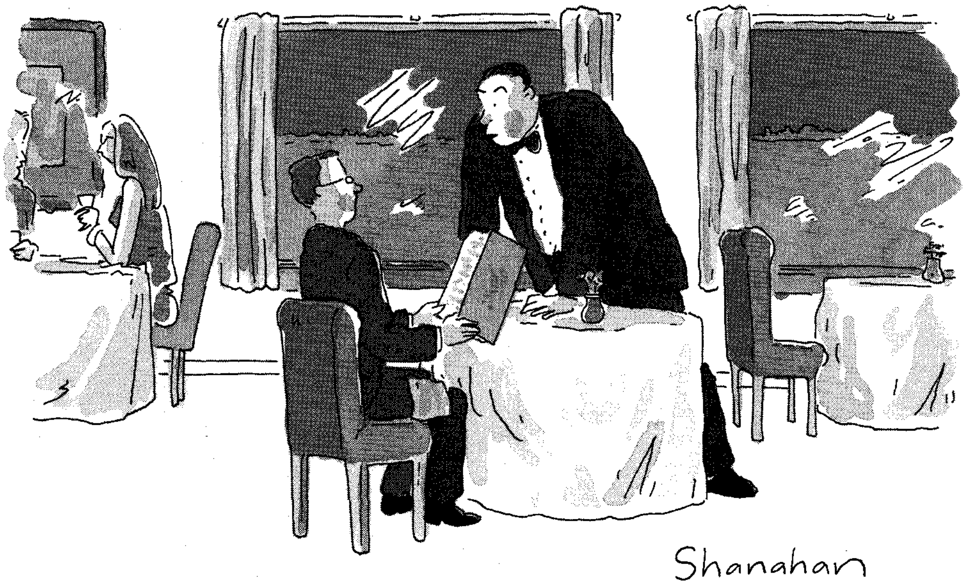
WITH hindsight, a certain bravado attaches itself to Carrington's early independence. She went her own way during the Slade years, yet often did so in a muddled state. Her upbringing had left her with a complex about sex: her mother, whom she hated, had permitted no mention of this subject—or, for that matter, of any bodily function. Dora's father, whom she loved, had married late, and when Dora was fifteen he had a stroke, which left him paralyzed and deaf. Increasingly, she came to see him as a prisoner among womenfolk who had scant feeling for anything except material objects. She admired his rustic simplicity and "the great way he lived inside himself and never altered his life to please the conventions." So she told her friend Mark Gertler after her father's death, adding, "My mother hated all this, and even admitted to me she married him out of pity because he wanted looking after.... She adores making a martyr of herself, toiling unnecessarily and working off her sensual side in religious outbursts. But it all has a dreadfully upsetting effect on one."

When Gertler proposed marriage, Carrington refused him, on the ground that marriage and art were incompatible. ("You have no idea how terrible a real English wedding is," she wrote to him about the wedding of her older sister. "Many relatives come and friends all out of curiosity to see this presumably religious rite; afterwards they all adjourn to the house, and eat like animals and talk, and view each other's clothes and secretly criticise everyone.") But Gertler continued to lay siege to her affections. The son of Jewish immigrants, he had been born and brought up in poverty, in the East End, and had reached the Slade with financial assistance from the Jewish Education Aid Society. The tension between his respect for his roots (which is vividly expressed in his portraits of his family) and his need to take advantage of the social possibilities offered by art school left him on edge; he was easily thrown into paroxysms of jealousy about Carrington. She spent much time in his company, but she would not—at least, initially—sleep with him. When she finally capitulated, his pent-up sexual urgency, combined with her petrified state, proved disastrous. "One thing I can never forget" was that "it made me inside feel ashamed, unclean," she wrote to him afterward. "Can I help it? I wish to God I could. Do not think I rejoice in being sexless, and am happy over this. It gives me pain also."

In the midst of all this, Carrington met Lytton Strachey. (Hampton's film begins at this point.) In December of 1915, she and a friend were invited by certain members of Bloomsbury to spend three days at Asheham, a small farmhouse in rural Sussex. "God knows why they invited me!" Carrington wrote to Gertler. But she was happier there than she had expected to be. An absence of servants meant that meals were eaten in the kitchen, and Carrington helped Vanessa Bell cook. "Lytton is rather curious," she remarked about this first meeting, again to Gertler. What she did not tell Gertler was that, while she and Strachey were walking on the Downs, Strachey had suddenly kissed her. She was furious, for she found this lanky intellectual physically repugnant. Waking early the next morning, she stole into his bedroom with a pair of scissors, intent on punishing him by cutting off his long red beard while he slept. But when she bent over the bed he opened his eyes, and his gaze immediately turned her hatred into love.

Their compatibility surprised many. Lytton, thirteen years older than Carrington, had a scholar's mind, whereas she was intuitive—an avid reader but relatively uneducated. Both, however, brought a freedom from conventionality to their perceptions of life. Carrington found that she never needed to lie to Lytton—that he never expected her to be anything different from what she was. And, though Lytton deliberately adopted a melodramatic manner to amuse his friends, beneath it lay a great honesty of mind.

Early in their relationship, Strachey and Carrington occasionally shared a bed, but Strachey, a practicing homosexual, was not converted. Paradoxically, Carrington's ability to love a man—to adore every physical detail of his person—seems to have been unleashed by Lytton, who was sexually undemanding. There was never any talk of marriage, but in 1917 they agreed to live together. Carrington foraged



"It's Brooklyn clam chowder—you got a problem with that?"

in the countryside and found Tidmarsh Mill, in Berkshire. "It's very romantic and lovely," she wrote Lytton, "with gables and lattice windows. . . . A charming Miller showed me over it." It also had an abundance of fruit trees, a vegetable garden, and electric light in every room: "I'm wildly excited. Hooray!"

Tidmarsh became an expression of Carrington's love for Lytton, for it was she who made it a pleasure to inhabit. She stained floors, painted walls, and enlivened Lytton's bedroom with a mural based on Adam and Eve. They had been there less than a year when they were visited by Rex Partridge, who was a soldier friend of Carrington's brother and had attained the rank of major at the age of twenty-three. "Well on Saturday evening Partridge came to this haunt of guile and wickedness," Carrington wrote to her brother, explaining that their guest had arrived unexpectedly, while she and Lytton were out walking. On their return, they found Partridge lying on the lawn, engrossed in an argument about the war with one of Lytton's brothers. His disregard for the carnage involved shocked Carrington, yet she was simultaneously drawn to this vigorous young man, who, she explained to Lytton, wanted to sail the Mediterranean and trade in wine and dress like a brigand. She continued to invite Partridge to Tidmarsh, while apologizing to Lytton for doing so: "I say do you mind if La Majora comes over on Sunday to till our soil? He seemed so lonely and bleated so winningly that I gave in. I will keep him on the potato patch, so you won't hardly notice him." Lytton, however, did notice him, and renamed him Ralph (pronounced "Rafe"); the two were soon enjoying, Carrington noticed, "long discussions on Einstein's theory whilst I darn the socks." It pleased both her and Lytton when Ralph agreed to become part of their ménage and found a job working for Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press.

MEANWHILE, Lytton had undone Victorian certainties in 1918, in his ironically titled "Eminent Victorians." He had become famous, and a sense of growing responsibility toward Carrington had begun to overshadow his affection for her. A shift occurred in their relationship when she learned, secondhand, that he dreaded her becoming too

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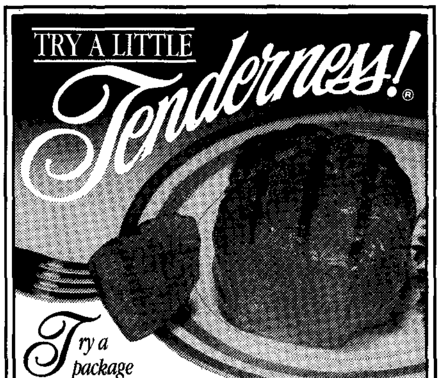

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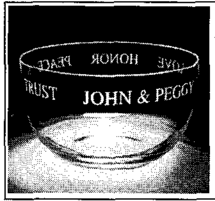

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dependent, a kind of permanent limpet in his life. Ralph, for his part, had become obsessed with Carrington, and now declared that if she did not marry him he would go abroad—a development that she knew would upset Lytton. So she agreed to marry Partridge for reasons that had more to do with Strachey than with anything else. While Lytton was travelling in Italy, she wrote to him:

> There is a great deal to say, and I feel very incompetent to write it today. . . . Rafe . . . threw himself in the Woolves' arms and asked their sympathy and advice. Leonard and Virginia both said it was hopeless for him to go on as he was, that he must either marry me, or leave me completely. He came down to Reading yesterday and met me at the . . . tea shop. He looked dreadfully ill and his mouth twitched. I'd really made up my mind some time ago that if it came to the ultimate point I would give in. . . .
>
> I saw the relief you felt at Rafe taking me away, so to speak, off your hands. . . . So in the café in that vile city of Reading, I said I'd marry him. . . .
>
> Last night in bed he told me everything Virginia and Leonard had told him. . . . As it was dark he didn't see the tears run down my cheeks. . . . They all wondered how you could have stood me so long, and how on earth we lived together alone here, as I didn't understand a word of literature and we had nothing in common, intellectually or physically. That was wrong. For nobody, I think, could have loved the Ballades, Donne and Macaulay's essays, and best of all Lytton's essays, as much as I. . . .
>
> You never knew, or never will know the big and devastating love I had for you. How I adored every hair, every curl on your head. How I devoured you whilst you read to me at night. How I loved the smell of your face in your sponge. Then the ivory skin of your hands, your voice, and your hat when I saw it coming along the top of the garden wall from my window. Say you will remember it.

When Carrington wrote this letter, she was twenty-eight. Though other passions did arise, they never occluded her love for Lytton. After a brief period during which Carrington lived with Ralph in London on weekdays and went to Tidmarsh only on weekends, their marital relations broke down, owing to his infidelities and to her affair with Gerald Brenan. One of Ralph's former fellow-officers and a very romantic figure, Brenan had settled in a remote region of Spain in 1919, taking two thousand books with him. He invited Carrington, Lytton, and Ralph to visit him at his cottage, in the mountains west of Almería, but his affair with Carrington was conducted mostly on his return trips to England. It was anguish for him, because Carrington—though passionately involved with him—would not leave Ralph, and could not leave Lytton. Many years later, Brenan told the writer V. S. Pritchett, "I was as proud of my affair with her as I was of having been in the line at Passchendaele. The tears I shed for her were, I thought, my true medals."

Another reason he shed so many tears was that he also had to share Carrington's affections with Henrietta Bingham, a glamorous American, who was the more exotic, in Carrington's eyes, because of her willingness to sing Negro spirituals at London parties. They became lovers, and Carrington admitted to Brenan that Henrietta had "killed my desires for *les jeunes garçons* pretty completely." She also felt it keenly when Henrietta abruptly dropped her. "I think H. although she gave me nothing else, gave a clue to my character," she told Brenan afterward, in a frank analysis of her sexuality. And she told another friend, "I feel now regrets at being such a blasted fool in the past, to stifle so many lusts I had in my youth, for various females." From then on, she flirted openly with women friends in her letters, but there is no evidence that she had any female lover other than Henrietta. She was too divided a character. "Probably if one was completely S[apphic]," she wrote to Brenan, "it would be much easier."

When Carrington is seen, as most of Bloomsbury saw her, in Lytton Strachey's shadow, she suffers. Because she spent so much time making houses hospitable (she and Lytton and Ralph moved to Ham Spray, near the Wiltshire Downs, in 1924), she is often portrayed as a woman who allowed the needs of others to submerge her own interests. "How can I do woodblocks," she wrote to Virginia Woolf, "when for the last month . . . I've been a ministering angel, hewer of wood and drawer of water." But there is pride as well as anger behind this remark, for she actually coped rather well with the conflict between domesticity and art, in part by regarding the home as a vehicle for artistic expression. "Carrington beautifying the house," Frances Marshall recalled about visiting Ham Spray, "with charming tiles and painted papers." If at times Carrington felt that her days had become a succession of "coal scuttles and endless meals," she nevertheless made bookplates, designed wallpapers, and worked on signboards for inns or shops, as well as decorative projects for her friends: orange peacocks on a purple ground for her neighbor Faith Henderson's bedroom doors, with green vines on the doorjambs; labels drawn in the shape of fluttering ribbons on two chests of drawers for Dorelia, the wife of Augustus John.

She directed her talents not toward public success and acclaim but toward private fulfillment. She disliked exhibiting ("I hate only the indecency of showing them what I have loved"), and her subject matter is more often than not the people, places, and objects that she knew well. Her willingness to turn her hand to a variety of tasks and her sympathy with popular art kept her outside the mainstream. "Today I started painting my greyhound," she wrote to Brenan of a signboard she was making for an inn. "It's probably the only painting of mine that will ever be seen in public, and survive me—so I shall try and make a very good signboard. I shall of course uphold the tradition of signboard painting as far as I can, and paint it with extreme care and precision." In another letter to Brenan she explained, "I am obviously a simple painter," adding that the French artist Simon Bussy, who was married to Lytton's sister, had compared her work to that of the naïve painter Rousseau. "I have more feeling for signboards and very simple eighteenth-century English painting than for modern French," she concluded.

Lytton did what he could to encourage her painting. He urged her, without success, to think seriously of exhibiting, and at Ham Spray he paid for the making of a studio. But his chief gift to her was of no material benefit: through him she came into the rich inheritance of her feelings. At Tidmarsh one day, she contemplated him in her diary. Impossible to describe his routine, she decided:

> Outwardly it's like the life of one of the hens. Meals dividing up the day, books read in morning, siesta, walk to Pangbourne, more books. A French lesson with me, perhaps dinner. Reading aloud. Bed and hot water bottles, and every day the same apparently. But inside, what a variety, and what fantastic doings. And great schemes I suspect.

Lytton adored her letters, including their mongrel prose, their misspellings, and the frequent evaporation of words into comic drawings. (A vegetable marrow seen under starlight becomes a prima donna resting on her couch, lit up by the footlights. Even dead lupines are acutely observed: "long spines with vertebras hanging by brown and musty threads.") She also gossiped to him about the books of friends. She read Dorothy Todd and Raymond Mortimer on interior decoration and decided against the modern movement, on the ground that it eliminated all untidiness.

Carrington's gift as a writer lay not just in the ease with which she translated experience into words but in her ability to understand emotions—her own and other people's. She did not turn aside from painful facts or seek consolation in false sentiment. Though her letters do not glitter with Virginia Woolf's verbal brilliance, their honesty transfixes. They became an important vehicle for her relationship with Lytton, because some of the things she needed to say could be said only in writing. She also wrote about him to other people. "Sometimes with Lytton," she wrote to Brenan,

> I have amazing conversations . . . about attitudes and states of mind, and the purpose of living. That is what I care for most in him. In the evenings suddenly one soars without corporeal bodies on these planes of thought. And I forget how dull and stupid I am and travel on also.

These conversations helped shape her philosophy. She wrote to her novelist friend Rosamond Lehmann, who was then married to Wogan Philipps, "I think Wogan puts almost too much emphasis on 'movement' and 'adventure,' " and she continued:

> Really I think it's NO good being anything but what you are and the great thing is never to do anything one doesn't feel genuinely inside oneself. (This is Lytton's creed, not *my* invention!) And actually one can be very tame inside in spite of all one's dashing about.

But, even as Strachey fed her happiness, he also caused a withering of her self-esteem. "I have loved Lytton for 6 years," she wrote to Brenan in 1922. "He might have made me his bootblack, or taken me to Siberia, and I would have given up every friend I had to be with him . . . and now it's all been melted down, smothered with pillow after pillow of despair." In the late twenties, while Lytton was reënlivened by the companionship of two young men, Philip Ritchie and Roger Senhouse, Carrington let her appearance deteriorate. "There

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were moments when Lytton did not want me," she had once written to Brenan, "when I recognized the isolation of it all, when one turned in despair for some relation with a mortal to assure one that one wasn't entirely cut off."

The person who has left the most telling description of her at this date was Lytton's niece, Julia Strachey:

> From a distance she looked a young creature, innocent and a little awkward, dressed in very odd frocks such as one would see in some quaint old picture-book; but if one came closer and talked to her, one soon saw age scored round her eyes—and something, surely, a bit worse than that—a sort of illness, bodily or mental, which sat oddly on so unspoilt a little face, with its healthy pear-blossom complexion. She had darkly bruised, hollowed, almost battered sockets; and the strange eyes themselves, wide, clear and light as a Northern sky, were not particularly comforting, because of her look of blindness—a statue's blindness, screening her own feelings.

When Lytton died, of stomach cancer, on January 21, 1932, Carrington was still recovering from a suicide attempt that Ralph Partridge had frustrated. Having been informed that Lytton would not recover, she had shut herself in the garage in the early hours of the morning, waiting to turn on the ignition at the right moment—when the noise of a nearby milking machine would drown that of the car engine. But that same morning Lytton had a sudden attack that sent Partridge in search of her. By a strange irony, as Carrington wrote afterward in her diary, Lytton, to whom she had given her life, returned it to her.

"I have become pretty cynical about life lately," she wrote some five weeks after his death, and went on:

> For a fortnight one is treated as if one had just recovered from a bad operation . . . then one must go for "a change." Now after a month one must start discussing the future, and be practical. . . . Desmond [MacCarthy] came down the other day to look at the library, and books, and get "the atmosphere" for an article. . . . Already I felt like Wordsworth's old housekeeper showing off Dove Cottage to visitors.

Every night, she sat in the library, remembering the hours Lytton had spent arranging his books, cleaning them, and pasting in bookplates. "This little room was the gleanings of our life together," she wrote in her diary on February 17th. "All our happiness was over this fire and with these books." For Carrington, it was agony to think of them being dispersed and sold. "I know these things are bound to happen," she wrote a couple of weeks later, to a friend. "But if one person really flavours all life for one it is difficult to see how to set about starting a new one."

This difficulty defeated her. "He had the power of altering me," she wrote; but the difference he made had not given her sufficient strength to live without him. At the insistence of Lytton's brother James, there was no funeral of any sort. And certainly there was no leave-taking of Lytton in Carrington's mind. She spoke to him in the pages of her diary, and now possessed him in her mind more completely than she ever had in life. For six weeks, her friends, especially Ralph, kept her under careful watch, plotting schemes that might engage her. She made visits to others and received visitors at Ham Spray, among them Leonard and Virginia Woolf. "I held her hands," Virginia remembered. "Her wrists seemed very small. She seemed helpless, deserted, like some small animal left." The next day, alone at Ham Spray, Carrington took the gun that she had obtained for shooting rabbits and shot herself in the chest. "Lytton's affected by this act" was Virginia Woolf's private opinion, which she recorded in her diary. "I sometimes dislike him for it." Meanwhile, because Carrington, in her last conscious moments, maintained that she had slipped on a mat, the inquest stated merely that her death had been caused by accident.

But if an arbitrary kiss had begun her relations with Lytton, chance played no part in her decision to terminate her life. She had sent keepsakes of Lytton to friends, and made a bonfire of his clothes. As she had long since admitted to Brenan, "I would like to paint like Uccello and I never shall . . . it has something—this desire—to do with my wish to have Lytton as a lover, a wish which the verriest goose could have known was impossible." And, in an equally frank but more high-spirited letter to Brenan, she had prophesied her end nine years before it came. "I often hope I shall die at forty," she wrote. "I could not bear the ignominy of becoming a stout boring elderly lady with a hobby of sketching in water colours." ♦

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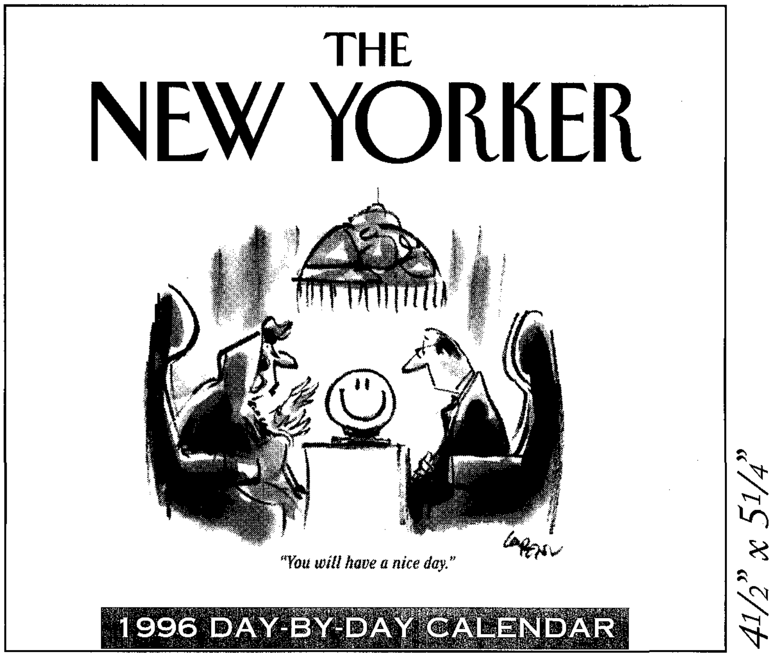
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LETTER FROM RWANDA

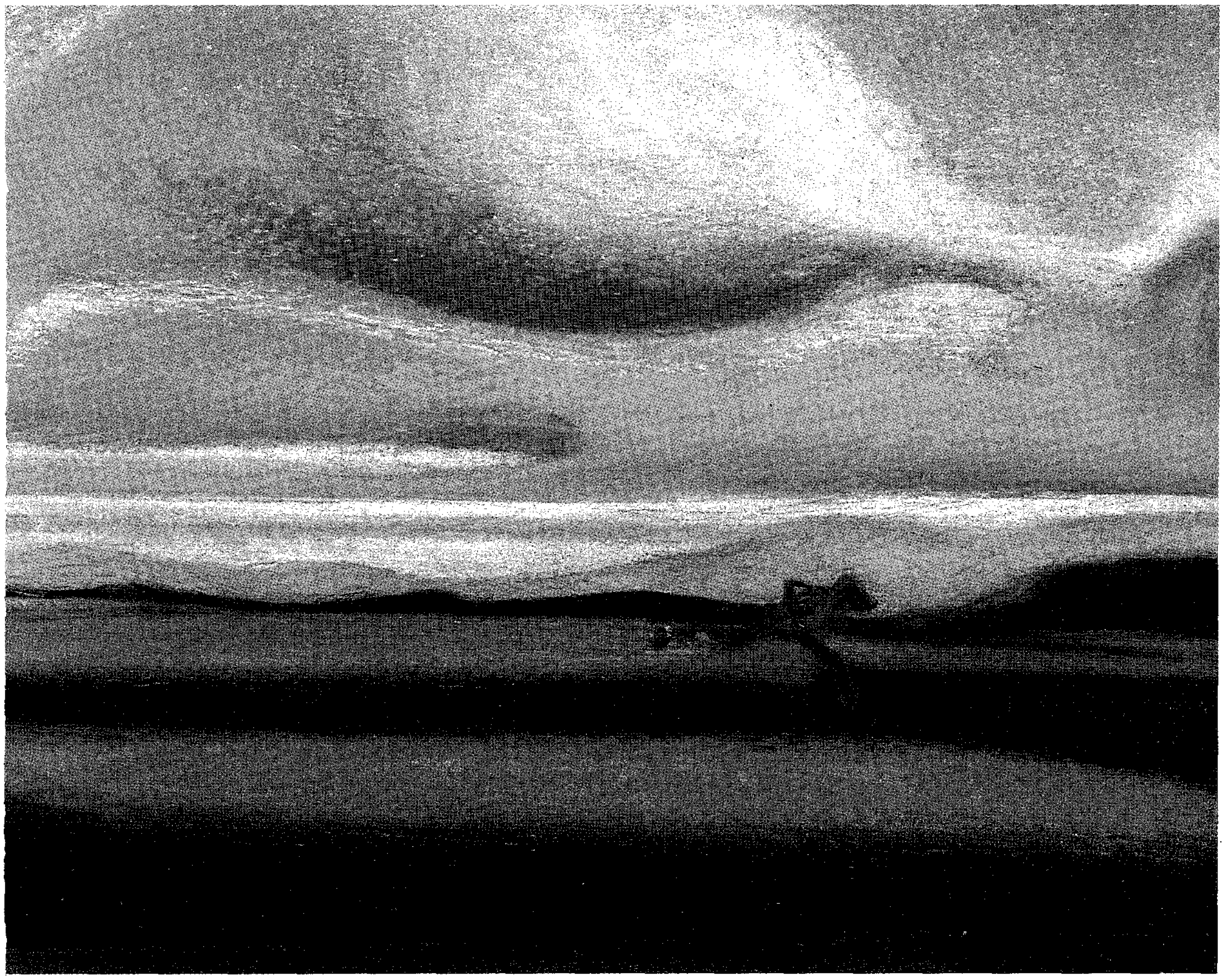
AFTER THE GENOCIDE

When a people murders up to a million fellow-countrymen, what does it mean to survive?

BY PHILIP GOUREVITCH

DECIMATION means the killing of every tenth person in a population, and in the spring and early summer of 1994 a program of massacres decimated the Republic of Rwanda. Although the killing was low-tech—performed largely by machete—it was carried out at dazzling speed: of an original population of seven million seven hundred thousand, at least eight hundred thousand were killed in just a hundred days. By comparison, Pol Pot's slaughter of a million Cambodians in four years looks amateurish, and the bloodletting in the former Yugoslavia measures up as little more than a neighborhood riot. The dead of Rwanda accumulated at nearly three times the rate of Jewish dead during the Holocaust. Members of the Hutu majority group began massacring the Tutsi minority in early April, and at the end of the month dead Tutsis were easier to find in Rwanda than live Tutsis. The hunt continued until mid-July, when a rebel army conquered Rwanda and brought the massacres to a halt. That October, a United Nations Commission of Experts found that the "concerted, planned, systematic and methodical" acts of "mass extermination perpetrated by Hutu elements against the Tutsi group" in Rwanda "constitute genocide." (This week, the International Tribunal for Rwanda is expected to hand down its first indictment of Rwandans charged with participation in the genocide.)

Hutus in Rwanda had been massacring Tutsis on and off since the waning days of Belgian colonial rule, in the late fifties. These state-sanctioned killings were generally referred to as "work," or "clearing the bush." The current crisis was triggered in 1990, when the Rwandese Patriotic Front, an army led by Tutsi exiles, attacked from Uganda, seizing a



foothold in the northeast and demanding an end to Hutu Power, as the state ideology was called. The members of the R.P.F. were known within the Rwandan government as *inyenzi* ("cockroaches"), and, following the obvious logic that the brother of one's enemy is also an enemy, all Tutsis—and any Hutus who opposed Hutu Power—were *ibyitso* ("accomplices"). As Hutu youth militias were recruited and armed for "civil defense," massacres of Tutsis and assassinations of Hutu oppositionists occurred with increasing regularity. In August of 1993, when the Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana signed a power-sharing peace accord with the R.P.F., extremist Hutus began to speculate whether the President himself had become an accomplice.

"Let whatever is smoldering erupt," *Kangura*, a Hutu extremist newspaper, advised in January of 1994. "At such a time, a lot of blood will be poured." Most Rwandans cannot read a newspaper, much less afford one, but all the right people read *Kangura*. In March, when *Kangura* ran the headline "HABYARIMANA WILL DIE IN MARCH," the article explained that the assassins would be Hutus bought by the cockroaches.

ON the evening of April 6, 1994, Thomas Kamilindi was in high spirits. His wife, Jacqueline, had baked a cake for a festive dinner in their home, in Kigali, Rwanda's capital. It was Thomas's thirty-third birthday, and that afternoon he had completed his last day of work as a reporter for Radio Rwanda. After ten years at the state-owned station, he had resigned in protest against the lack of political balance in news programming. Thomas was taking a shower when Jacqueline began pounding on the bathroom door. "Hurry up!" she shouted. "The President has been attacked!" Thomas locked the doors of his house and sat by the radio. President Habyarimana's plane, returning from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, had been shot down over Kigali. There were no survivors.

Thomas, who had well-placed friends, had heard that large-scale massacres of Tutsis were being prepared nationwide by the President's extremist entourage, and that lists of Hutu oppositionists had been drawn up for the first wave of killing. But he had never imagined that Habyarimana himself might be targeted. If the extremists had sacrificed him, who was safe? (Seven months earlier, in Burundi—Rwanda's southern neighbor, and the only country to have the same Hutu-Tutsi mix as Rwanda—the assassination of the Hutu President by Tutsi soldiers had set off a two-month Hutu uprising that left at least fifty thousand dead, most of them Tutsis. Now the radio announced that Burundi's new Hutu President, Cyprien Ntaryamira, had been on board Habyarimana's plane, and had died alongside him.)

The radio normally went off the air at 10 P.M., but that night it stayed on. When the bulletins ceased, music began to play, and to Thomas the music, which

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LORENZO MATTOTTI / PHOTOGRAPHS BY GILLES PERESS

continued through his sleepless night, confirmed that the worst had been let loose in Rwanda. The next day, Radio Mille Collines, a popular station founded by Hutu extremists, blamed the Rwandese Patriotic Front for the assassination. If Thomas had believed that, he would have been at the microphone, not at the receiver. He didn't leave his house for a week. He collected news from around the country by telephone and filed reports for a French radio service.

Within hours of Habyarimana's death, roadblocks set up by the military and youth militias that were known as *interahamwe*—those who attack together—had appeared throughout Kigali, and assassins from the Presidential Guard were dispatched with lists of opposition leaders to kill, including the Hutu Prime Minister. The next day, soldiers killed ten Belgian blue helmets from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda, which had been deployed when the peace treaty with the R.P.F. was signed. After that, the U.N. troops offered little resistance to the killers, and foreign governments rushed to shut down their embassies and evacuate their nationals. "You cockroaches must know you are made of flesh," a broadcaster at Radio Mille Collines proclaimed. "We won't let you kill. We will kill you."

Encouraged by political and civic leaders, the massacring of Tutsis spread from region to region. Following the militias' example, Hutus young and old rose to the task. Neighbors hacked neighbors to death in their homes, and colleagues hacked colleagues to death in their workplaces. Priests killed their parishioners, and elementary-school teachers killed their students. Many of the largest massacres occurred in churches and stadiums where Tutsis had sought refuge—often at the invitation of local authorities, who then oversaw their execution. In mid-April, at least five thousand Tutsis were packed in the Gatwaro Stadium, in the western city of Kibuye; as the massacre there began, gunmen in the bleachers shot zigzag waves of bullets and tossed grenades to make the victims stampede back and forth before militiamen waded in to finish the job with machetes.

Throughout Rwanda, mass rape and looting accompanied the slaughter. Militia bands, fortified with potent banana beer and assorted drugs, were bused from massacre to massacre. Hutu prisoners were organized in work details to clear cadavers. Radio announcers reminded listeners to take special care to disembowel pregnant victims. As an added incentive to the killers, Tutsis' belongings were parcelled out in advance—the radio, the couch, the goat, the opportunity to rape a young girl. A councilwoman in one Kigali neighborhood was reported to have offered fifty Rwandese francs apiece (about thirty cents at the time) for severed heads, a practice known as "selling cabbages."

On April 12th, Thomas received a call from Radio Rwanda saying that Eliézer Niyitegeka wanted to see him. Niyitegeka, a former radio colleague, had just been appointed Minister of Information, replacing an oppositionist who had been killed. Thomas walked to the station, and Niyitegeka told him that he had to come back to work. Thomas reminded him why he'd quit, and the Minister said, "O.K., Thomas, let the soldiers decide." Thomas hedged: he would not take a job under threat but would wait for an official letter of employment. Niyitegeka agreed, and Thomas returned home to learn from Jacqueline that, while he was gone, two soldiers from the Presidential Guard had appeared, carrying a list with his name on it.

Thomas was a Hutu, but he was not surprised to learn that he was on an assassins' list: at Radio Rwanda, he had refused to speak the language of Hutu Power and had led two strikes; he was a member of the Social Democratic Party, which had ties to the R.P.F.; and he was from the city of Butare, Rwanda's second-largest city, in the south—a region known for its moderate politics. Considering these factors, Thomas went to bed determined to seek a safer refuge than his home. The next morning, three soldiers came to his door. He invited them to have a seat, but the leader of the contingent told him, "We don't sit when we're working." The soldier said, "Come with us," and Thomas said he wasn't budging until he knew where he was going. "You come with us or your family will have trouble," the soldier said.

Thomas left with the soldiers, and walked up the hill, past the deserted American Embassy and along the Boulevard de la Révolution. At the corner in front of the Soras Insurance Building, across from the Ministry of Defense, there was a bunker, with soldiers around it. The soldiers scolded Thomas for describing their activities in his reports to the international media. He was ordered to sit down on the street. When he refused, the soldiers beat him. They beat him hard and slapped him repeatedly, shouting insults and questions. Then someone kicked him in the stomach, and he sat down on the street. "O.K., Thomas," one of the men said. "Write a letter to your wife and say what you like, because you're going to die."

A jeep drove up, and the soldiers in it got out and kicked Thomas. Then he was given pen and paper, and he wrote, "Listen, Jacqueline, they're going to kill me. I don't know why. They say I'm an accomplice of the R.P.F. That's why I'm going to die, and here's my testament." Thomas wrote his will, and handed it over. One of the soldiers said, "O.K., let's finish this," and stood back, readying his rifle.

"I didn't look," Thomas recalled when he told me of his ordeal. "I really believed he would shoot me. Then another vehicle came up, and suddenly I saw a major with his foot up on the bunker, and he said, 'Thomas?' When he called me, I came out of a sort of dream."

Thomas is spry, compact, and bright-eyed. His face and hands are as expressive as his speech. He is a radio man, a raconteur, and, however bleak his tale, the telling gave him pleasure. After all, he was alive. His was what passed for a happy story in Rwanda. But the story made no sense: the major who had spared his life may have recognized Thomas, but to Thomas the major was a stranger. It was not unusual for someone to survive or escape from a large massacre—a man told me that his niece was macheted, then stoned, then dumped in a latrine, only to get up each time and stagger away—but Thomas had been deliberately reprieved, and he could not say why. He shot me a look of comic astonishment—eyebrows high, forehead furrowed, a quirky smile working his mouth—to say that his survival was far more mysterious than his peril had been.

During the genocide, the work of the killers was not regarded as a crime in Rwanda; it was effectively the law of the land, and every citizen was responsible for its administration. That way, if a person who should be killed was let go by one party he could expect to be caught and killed by somebody else. When the major called off Thomas's execution, the soldiers who escorted him home told him he was still slated for death. In the ensuing weeks, three assassins were sent for him, and each left with a warning that the next one would get him.

I spoke with Thomas this past July, on a soft summer evening in Kigali—the hour of sudden equatorial dusk, when flocks of crows and lone buzzards reel, screaming, between the trees and rooftops. Walking back to my hotel, I passed the corner where Thomas had expected to be killed. The Soras Insurance Building's plate-glass portico was a tattered web of bullet holes.

"If I don't kill that rat he'll die," Clov says in Samuel Beckett's "Endgame." But those who commit genocide have chosen to make nature their enemy, not their ally.

"WHY AM I ALIVE?"

Living came to seem an accident of fate.

I WENT to Rwanda last summer, a year after the killings, because I wanted to know how Rwandans understood what had happened in their country and how they were getting on in the aftermath. The word "genocide" and the images of the nameless and numberless dead left too much to the imagination.

Rwanda is spectacular to behold, the rival of any Tuscan idyll. Through its center, a winding succession of steep, tightly terraced slopes radiates out from small roadside settlements and solitary compounds. Gashes of red clay and black loam mark fresh hoe work; eucalyptus trees flash silver against brilliant-green tea plantations; banana trees are everywhere. The land presents hills of every possible variety: jagged rain forests, undulating moors, broad swells of savanna, volcanic peaks as sharp as filed teeth, and round-shouldered buttes. During the rainy season, the clouds are huge and low and fast, lightning flickers through the nights, and by day the land is lustrous. After the rains, the skies lift, the terrain takes on a ragged look beneath the flat unvaried haze of the dry season, and in the savannas of the Akagera Park wildfire blackens the hills.

One day, when I was returning to Kigali from the south, the car mounted a rise between two winding valleys, the windshield filled with purple clouds, and I asked Joseph, the man who was giving me a ride, whether Rwandans realize what a beautiful country they have. "Beautiful?" he said. "After the things that happened here? The people aren't good. If the people were good, the country might be O.K." Joseph told me that his brother and sister had been killed, and he made a soft hissing click with his tongue against his teeth. "The country is empty," he said. "Empty!"

It was not just the dead who were missing: when the genocide began, the R.P.F. resumed its war, and as the rebels advanced in the summer of 1994 some two million Hutus fled into exile at the behest of the leaders and radio announcers who had earlier urged them to kill. This most rapid exodus in modern history—two hundred and fifty thousand people crossed a single bridge into Tanzania in one day, and a million entered Zaire in one week—made the R.P.F. victory possible and, at the same time, rendered it incomplete. In effect, the refugees, clustered in camps just beyond Rwanda's borders, constitute a rump state; the government, the army, and the militias that presided over the genocide remain intact and in arms around the camps, reminding Rwanda by both their absence and their presence that the fight is not over.

Yet except in some rural areas in southern Rwanda, where the desertion of Hutus had left nothing but bush to reclaim the fields around crumbling adobe houses, I, as a newcomer, could not see the absences that blinded Joseph to Rwanda's beauty. Yes, there were grenade-flattened buildings, shot-up façades, and mortar-pitted roads, and I knew that the retreating Hutu Army and militias had left the country pillaged: a virtually empty treasury; the tea-curing factories and coffee-depulping machines—Rwanda's source of foreign exchange—destroyed; electrical and telephone lines slashed; water systems sabotaged and often clogged with bodies. But these were the ravages of war, not of genocide, and by the time I arrived in Rwanda most essential services had been restored and most of the dead buried. Fifteen months before, Rwanda had been the most densely populated country in Africa. Now the work of the killers looked just as they must have wanted it to look when they were done: invisible.

From time to time, mass graves were discovered and excavated, and the remains were transferred to new, properly consecrated mass graves. But even the occasionally exposed bones, the conspicuous number of amputees and people with deforming scars, and the superabundance of packed orphanages could not be taken as evidence that what had happened to Rwanda was an attempt to exterminate a people. There were only people's stories.

"Every survivor wonders why he is alive," Abbé Modeste Mungwararora, a Tutsi priest at the cathedral in Butare, told me. Abbé Modeste had hidden for weeks in his sacristy, eating Communion wafers, before moving to his study and, finally, into the rafters of a house where some neighboring nuns lived. The obvious explanation of his survival was that the R.P.F. had come to the rescue. By the time the R.P.F. had installed a new government, in mid-July of 1994, however, seventy-five per cent of Rwanda's Tutsis were dead. In this regard, at least, the genocide had been entirely successful: to those who had been targeted, it was not death but life that seemed an accident of fate.

"I had eighteen people killed in my house," Étienne Niyonzima, a former businessman who is now a deputy in the National Assembly, told me. "Everything was totally destroyed—a place of fifty-five metres by fifty metres totally destroyed. In my neighborhood, they killed six hundred and forty-seven people. They had the number of everyone's house, and for the Tutsis and intellectuals they went through and painted the numbers with red paint. My wife was at a friend's, shot with two bullets. But she is still alive, only"—he waited a moment, then said, "she has no arms. The others with her were killed. The *interahamwe* left her for dead. Her whole family of sixty-five in Gitarama were killed."

Niyonzima was in hiding at the time. Only after he had been separated from his wife for three months did he learn that she and four of their children had survived. "Well," he said, "one son was cut in the head with a machete. I don't know where he went." His voice lowered, and caught. "He disappeared." Then Niyonzima clicked his tongue, and said, "But the others are still alive. Quite honestly, I don't understand at all how I was saved."

Laurent Nkongoli attributes his survival to "Providence, and also good neighbors, an old woman who said, 'Run away, we don't want to see your corpse.' " Nkongoli, a lawyer, was one of more than eight thousand oppositionists, most of them Tutsis, who had been jailed without charges for as long as six months following the R.P.F.'s 1990 attack. Many of the prisoners were tortured, and dozens died, but Nkongoli, who is now the Vice-President of the National Assembly, shows no outward sign of his recent ordeals. He is a robust man, with a taste for double-breasted suit jackets and lively ties, and he moves, as he speaks, with a brisk determination. In the third week of April last year, when his neighbor urged him to flee, Nkongoli left Kigali and sneaked through the lines to the R.P.F. zone, where his wife and children already were.

"Before leaving, I had accepted death," he said. "At a certain moment, this happens. One hopes not to die cruelly, but one expects to die anyway. Not death by machete, one hopes, but with a bullet. If you were willing to pay for it, you could often ask for a bullet. Death was more or less normal, a resignation. You lose the will to fight. There were four thousand Tutsis killed here at Kacyiru"—a neighborhood of Kigali. "The soldiers brought them here, and told them to sit down because they were going to throw grenades. And they sat.

"Rwandan culture is a culture of fear," Nkongoli went on. "I remember what people said." He adopted a piping voice, and his face took on a look of disgust. " 'Just let us pray, then kill us,' or 'I don't want to die in the street, I want to die at home.' " He resumed his normal voice. "When you're that resigned and oppressed, you're already dead. It shows the genocide was prepared for too long. I detest this fear. These victims of genocide were being killed for so long that they were already dead."

I reminded Nkongoli that, for all his hatred of fear, he'd said he had accepted death before he left. "Yes," he said. "I got tired in the genocide. You struggle so long, then you get tired."

Every Rwandan I spoke with seemed to have a favorite unanswerable ques-

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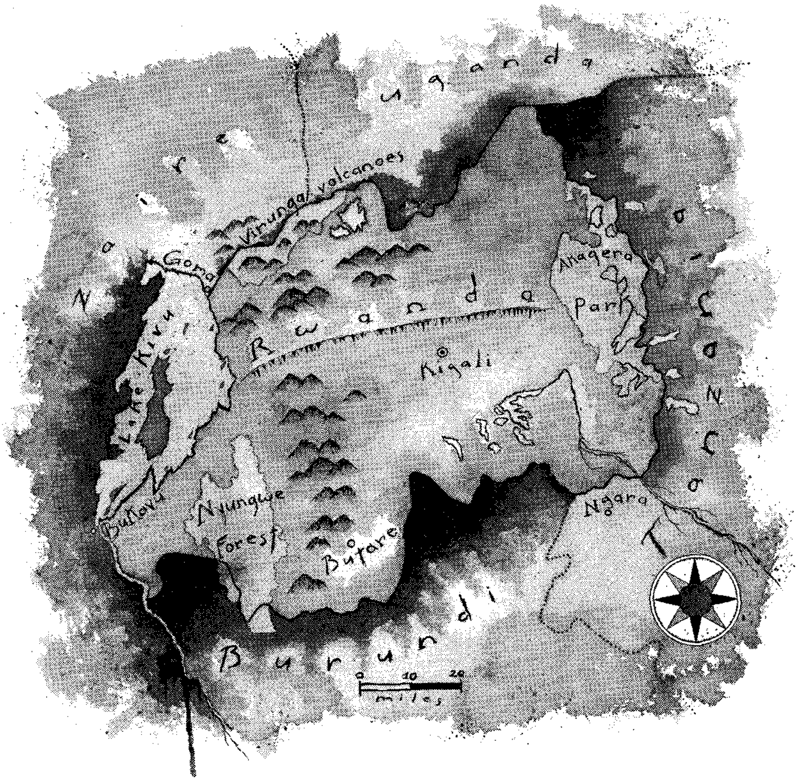
Weapons collected at the refugee camp in Goma, Zaire.

tion. For Nkongoli, it was how so many Tutsis had allowed themselves to be killed. For François-Xavier Nkurunziza, a Kigali lawyer of mixed ethnicity, the question was how so many Hutus had allowed themselves to kill. Nkurunziza, who was a Hutu by law and is married to a Tutsi, lost many family members last year. "Conformity is very deep, very developed here," he told me. "In Rwandan history, everyone obeys authority. People revere power, and there isn't enough education. You take a poor, ignorant population, and give them arms, and say, 'It's yours. Kill.' They'll obey. The peasants, who were paid or forced to kill, were looking up to people of higher socioeconomic standing to see how to behave. So the people of influence, or the big financiers, are often the big men in the genocide. They may think that they didn't kill, because they didn't take life with their own hands, but the people were looking to them for their orders. And in Rwanda an order can be given very quietly."



In Rwanda and in the border camps, both R.P.F. leaders and Hutu Power leaders believe that there will be another war, and soon. (Map illustration by Mike Reagan.)

As I travelled around the country, collecting accounts of the killing, it almost seemed as if, with the machete, the nail-studded club, a few well-placed grenades, and a few bursts of automatic-rifle fire, the quiet orders of Hutu Power had made the neutron bomb obsolete. Then I came across a man in a market butchering a cow with a machete, and I saw that it *was* hard work. His big, precise strokes made a sharp hacking noise, and it took many hacks—two, three, four, five hard hacks—to chop through the cow's leg. How many hacks to dismember a person?

At Nyarubuye, in the province of Kibungo, near the Tanzanian border, more than a thousand Tutsis were rounded up in the church, and hundreds of bodies had been left where they were found, for commemorative purposes: tangled skeletons with weather-greened skin and flowered clothing patched over them; lone skulls in the grass; a pelvis with a sneaker stuck in it; and a lower jaw attached to a neck and torso with the rest of the head gone. The killers at Nyarubuye killed with machetes all day, and at night they hobbled the survivors by severing their Achilles tendons; then they went off to eat and sleep, and returned in the morning to kill again. When the operation was finished, even the little terra-cotta statues in the sacristy had been methodically decapitated. "They were associated with Tutsis," the R.P.F. sergeant who showed me around the site explained.

The killers at Nyarubuye "had become mad," the sergeant said. "They weren't human beings anymore." But Dr. Richard Mollica, the director of Harvard's Program in Refugee Trauma, believes that mass political violence cannot simply be written off as madness. "It is one of the great human questions," he told me. "Why, in these situations, is there always the extra sadism to achieve the political goal? You achieve your political power, why do you have to flay some guy alive like a piece of lox and then hang him out to suffocate in the sun? What does a guy get from raping a woman? One five-minute rape can destroy an entire family for a generation. Five minutes. Now we're talking about a whole country, and my opinion is that the psychology of young people is not that complicated, and most of the people who commit atrocities in most of these situations are young males. Young males are really the most dangerous people on the planet, because they easily respond to authority and they want approval. They are given the rewards for getting into the hierarchical system, and they're given to believe they're building heaven on earth. In most atrocities, there's a big utopian dream—a cleaner society, or purer society. Young people are very idealistic, and the powers prey on the young people by appealing to their more idealistic nature."

Mollica also challenges the "presupposition in modern Western society that people who commit a murder will live to regret it or that it will sicken their lives." He said, "I haven't seen it, to tell you the truth." In fact, he told me, "people who commit murder find it very easy to rationalize it and to come to terms with it," and this is particularly so "when it's being condoned by the state."

Nobody knows how many Rwandans it took to butcher as many as a million of their countrymen in three months, and nobody could have known in advance how many would be needed. The people were the weapon, and that meant everybody: the entire Hutu population was called upon to kill the entire Tutsi population. In addition to insuring obvious numerical advantages, this arrangement eliminated any questions of accountability that might arise. If everybody is implicated, then implication becomes meaningless.

"In a war, you can't be neutral," Stanislas Mbonampeka told me. "If you're not for your country, are you not for its attackers?" Mbonampeka, a large man with a calm, steady manner, is the Minister of Justice in the Rwandan government in exile, a self-appointed body culled largely from the deposed government that presided over the genocide. Mbonampeka was not in the government himself during the killing, but he operated informally as its agent; he pleaded its cause both at home and in Europe, to the surprise of those who remembered that in the early nineties he had been a prominent human-rights activist. In 1992, during a brief stint as Habyarimana's Justice Minister, he even issued an arrest warrant against Léon Mugesera, a Hutu Power ideologue who had delivered a famous speech calling for the extermination of Tutsis.

"This was not a conventional war," Mbonampeka told me last June, when I found him living a few miles from the Rwandan border, at the Protestant Guest House in Goma, Zaire. "The enemies were everywhere." I asked him if what he called civil defense was what the United Nations calls genocide. "It wasn't genocide," he told me. "Personally, I don't believe in the genocide. There were massacres within which there were crimes against humanity or crimes of war. But the Tutsis were not killed as Tutsis, only as sympathizers of the R.P.F." In fact, Mbonampeka said, "ninety-nine per cent of Tutsis were pro-R.P.F. There was no difference between the ethnic and the political." Even the women and children? "Think about it," he said. "When the Germans attacked France, France defended itself against Germany. They understood that all Germans were the enemy. The Germans killed women and children, so you do, too."

I had seen Mbonampeka's name on a list, produced by the government in Kigali, of four hundred and fourteen "suspected commanders, organizers and authors of genocide." He did not seem concerned about the prospect of indictment. Even if the international tribunal condemns the leaders of Hutu Power, Mbonampeka said that "those who are condemned will remain heroes, because they saved their people. If not for them, we would be dead."

IN the famous story, the older brother, Cain, was a cultivator, and Abel, the younger, was a herdsman. They made their offerings to God—Cain from his crops, Abel from his herds. Abel's portion won God's regard, Cain's did not. So Cain killed Abel.

Rwanda's first inhabitants were cave-dwelling Pygmies, whose descendants today are the Twa people, a disenfranchised group who make up less than one per cent of the population. Hutus and Tutsis came later, but their origins and the order of their immigrations are not accurately known. While convention holds that Hutus are a Bantu people, who settled Rwanda first, and Tutsis are a Nilotic people, who migrated from Ethiopia, these theories draw more on legend than on documentable fact. With time, Hutus and Tutsis spoke the same language, intermarried, followed the same religion, and shared the same social and political structure of small chiefdoms. Some chiefs were Hutus, some were Tutsis; Hutus and Tutsis fought together in the chiefs' armies; through marriage and clientage, Hutus could become hereditary Tutsis, and Tutsis could become hereditary Hutus. Because of all this mixing, ethnographers and historians agree that Hutus and Tutsis cannot properly be called distinct ethnic groups.

Still, the names Hutu and Tutsi stuck. They had meaning, and though there is no general agreement about what word best describes that meaning—"classes," "castes," and "ranks" are favorites—the source of the distinction is undisputed: Hutus were cultivators, and Tutsis were herdsmen. This was the original inequality: cattle are a more valuable asset than produce, and the name Tutsi became widely synonymous with the political and economic élite. The stratification was accelerated after 1860, when the Mwami Kigeri Rwabugiri, a Tutsi king, launched a series of military and political campaigns to centralize his authority and extend it over most of the country. According to the American historian Alison Des Forges, a consultant for Human Rights Watch/Africa, Tutsi élitism in the late nineteenth century derived more from financial and martial power than from racial identity. The new élite had "a sense of its own superiority," Des Forges writes, and then asks, "But has there ever been an élite that did not?"

Within the jumble of Rwandan racial, or tribal, characteristics, the question of appearances is particularly touchy—last year, it often meant life or death—but nobody denies that there are physical archetypes: for Hutus, stocky and round-faced, dark-skinned, flat-nosed, thick-lipped, and square-jawed; for Tutsis, lanky and long-faced, light-skinned, narrow-nosed, thin-lipped, and narrow-chinned. Nature presents countless exceptions. ("You can't tell us apart," Laurent Nkongoli, the Vice-President of the National Assembly, told me. "*We* can't tell us apart. I was on a bus in the north once, and because I was in the north, where they"—Hutus—"were, and because I ate corn, which they eat, they said, 'He's one of us.' But I'm a Tutsi from Butare.") Still, when the Europeans arrived in Rwanda at the end of the nineteenth century, they formed a picture of a stately race of warrior kings, surrounded by herds of long-horned cattle, and a subordinate race of short, dark peasants, hoeing tubers and picking bananas. The white men assumed that this was the tradition of the place, and they thought it a natural arrangement.

"Race science" was all the rage in Europe in those days, and for students of Central Africa the key doctrine was the so-called Hamitic hypothesis, propounded by John Hanning Speke, the Nile explorer. Speke's idea was that all culture and civilization in the region had been introduced by the taller, fairer people, whom he declared a Caucasoid tribe of Ethiopian origin, and therefore a race superior to the native Negroids. Speke had never been to Rwanda—no white man had until 1894; even the slave traders had passed the place by—but the Germans and Belgians who colonized the country took him at his word.

In 1897, two years after Rwabugiri's death, the Germans instituted a policy of indirect rule, which harnessed Tutsi chiefs as puppets and as feudal lords to the Hutus. The Belgians took over after the First World War, and, working in collaboration with the Catholic Church, proceeded to further dismantle local structures of Hutu autonomy. Then, in 1933-34, the Belgians conducted a census in order to issue identity cards, which labelled every Rwandan as either Hutu (eighty-five per cent) or Tutsi (fourteen per cent) or Twa (one per cent). The identity cards made it virtually impossible for Hutus to become Tutsis, and allowed the Belgians to perfect the administration of an apartheid system that perpetuated the myth of Tutsi superiority.

So the offering of the Tutsi herdsmen found favor in the eyes of the colonial lords, and the offering of the Hutu cultivators did not. While the great majority of Hutus and Tutsis still maintained their customary relations, Alison Des Forges writes, "extremist Tutsis, encouraged by European admiration and influenced by the amalgam of myth and pseudo-anthropology, moved from élitism to racism," and there developed simultaneously "a corresponding and equally virulent formulation on the part of extremist Hutus." Tribalism begets tribalism, and, as the mood in Africa moved toward independence and majority rule, the Hutu Power movement began to emerge. In 1959, when violence erupted, the Belgians went with the tide, backing the Hutu revolutionaries as they themselves prepared to depart.

Rwanda's first President was Grégoire Kayibanda, inaugurated in 1962, and by the time General Juvénal Habyarimana ousted him, in 1973, the power struggle had become an internal affair of the Hutu élite, much like feuds among royal Tutsi clans had in the past. Rwanda's revolutionaries had become what V. S. Naipaul calls postcolonial "mimic men," who reproduce the abuses against which they rebelled, while ignoring the fact that their past-masters were ultimately banished by those they enchained. (France quickly drew Rwanda into its neo-colonial sphere of influence in Francophone Africa. When the R.P.F. attacked in 1990, France sent arms and also troops to fight alongside the Rwandan Army. After Habyarimana's death, the French continued to support his Hutu Power successors, providing arms, refuge, and diplomatic support throughout the genocide—support that followed them into exile. On the eve of the R.P.F. victory in late June of 1994, when France launched a "humanitarian" military operation into Rwanda from Zaire to assist its routed friends, *interahamwe* bands greeted the French soldiers with a sign proclaiming, "Welcome French Hutus.")

By 1990, the Tutsi diaspora, which began in the aftermath of the Hutu Power revolution, had become the largest and longest-standing unresolved refugee problem in Africa. But Habyarimana, citing Rwanda's chronic overpopulation, maintained that there wasn't room for the Tutsis to come home. Ninety-five per cent of Rwanda's land was under cultivation, and the average family consisted of eight people living as subsistence farmers on less than half an acre. In 1986, Habyarimana had declared that Rwanda was full; end of discussion. The Rwandese Patriotic Front was founded the next year in Uganda, as a secret fraternity of Tutsi refugees who had become officers in the Ugandan Army. The R.P.F. formed itself against Habyarimana, just as Hutu Power had been formed in his image.

In October, 1990, the R.P.F. attacked Rwanda, demanding an end to tyranny and exclusion. The invasion came at a sensitive moment for Hutu Power: earlier in the year, Habyarimana, facing domestic political and economic crises, had adopted reforms that allowed for a host of opposition parties to spring up. For a time, the political scuffling was mostly an intra-Hutu affair, but then the R.P.F. offered Hutu Power its best weapon yet against the menace of pluralism: the unifying spectre of a common enemy. Three days after the R.P.F. attacked, the Rwandan Army staged a fake assault on Kigali, and the government, blaming infiltrators and accomplices, began arresting Tutsis and Hutu oppositionists en masse. A week later, Hutu officials in Kibilira were instructed to kill Tutsis as part of their communal work obligation; three hundred and fifty Tutsis died in what can be seen as the first massacre of the genocide. The widely circulated "Hutu Ten Commandments," published in the newspaper *Kangura* shortly after the R.P.F. invasion, urged vigilance against the accomplices on all fronts—sex, business, and affairs of state. "The Hutus should stop having mercy on the Tutsis," the eighth commandment went.

"We the people are obliged to take responsibility ourselves and wipe out this scum," Habyarimana's good friend Léon Mugesera explained in his celebrated 1992 speech. "No matter what you do, do not let them get away." Invoking the Hamitic hypothesis that Tutsis came from Ethiopia, Mugesera advised that they should be sent back there, by way of the Nyabarongo River, which ultimately feeds into the Nile. His message was understood; last year, tens of thousands of dead Tutsis were dumped in Rwanda's rivers.

Genesis identifies the first murder as a fratricide. The motive is political—the elimination of a perceived rival. When God asks what happened, Cain offers his notoriously guileless lie: "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" The shock in the story is not the murder, which begins and ends in one sentence, but Cain's shamelessness and the leniency of God's punishment. For killing his brother, Cain is condemned to a life as "a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." When he protests, "Whoever finds me will slay me," God says, "Not so! If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." Quite literally, Cain gets away with murder; he even receives special protection. As the legend indicates, this blood-revenge model of justice was not viable. People soon became so craven that "the earth was filled with violence," and God regretted his creation so much that he erased it with a flood. In the new age that followed, law would eventually emerge as the principle of social order. But that was many fratricidal struggles later.

THERE'S NO POL POT HERE

Rwanda's most wanted are too numerous to track.

In criminal syndicates like the Mafia, a person who has become invested in the logic of the gang is said to be owned by it. This concept is organic to Rwanda's traditional social, political, and economic structures, which have been organized since precolonial times in tight pyramids of patron-client relationships. Every hill has its chief, every chief has his deputies and his sub-bosses; and the pecking order runs from the smallest social cell to the highest central authority.

Rwanda's postcolonial civil bureaucracy followed the pattern with famous efficiency, and at the top sat the Hutu Power oligarchy, composed in later years largely of President Habyarimana, his extended family, and assorted business, political, and military cronies. Looking back in the wake of the genocide, Alison Des Forges writes that far from being "part of the 'failed state' syndrome that appears to plague some parts of Africa, Rwanda was too successful as a state." But if Hutu Power essentially owned Rwanda, who owned Hutu Power? Habyarimana was its chief patron, and after his assassination no single figure emerged to assume his stature.

Habyarimana's assassins have never been positively identified, but at the moment the bulk of circumstantial evidence collected by international investigators points to a job sponsored by members of the Hutu Power entourage. Immediately after the Presidential plane was shot down, the Rwandan Army sealed off the area around Kigali Airport, from which the surface-to-air missiles that hit the plane had been fired, thus preventing an investigation by the U.N. and adding to speculation that top Rwandan officers had something to hide. Leaders of the Hutu population in exile still insist that the R.P.F. fired the missiles. "The R.P.F. started last year's hostilities with the death of the President," Stanislas Mbonampeka, the Minister of Justice in exile, told me. "That's the key to everything." But he acknowledged that the affair remains a mystery. "Whoever did that are the ones truly responsible for the situation in Rwanda. If it was the entourage of the President, that would change everything for us."

Regardless of who killed Habyarimana, the fact remains that the organizers of the massacres were primed to exploit his death instantaneously. The Rwandan genocide, however, does not have a signal signature—a Hitler, a Pol Pot, a Stalin. The list of Rwanda's most wanted is a hodgepodge of Hutu Power bosses, military officers, businessmen, mayors, journalists, civil-service functionaries, teachers, taxi-drivers, shopkeepers, and untitled hatchet men—dizzying to keep track of and impossible to rank in any precise hierarchy. Some were said to have given orders—loudly or quietly—and others to have followed orders, but what emerges is the picture of a society run according to a plan that had been conceived to look planless. (While Rwanda's military and political élite spent the night of the assassination cranking up the genocidal engines, in Burundi, whose President had also been killed, the military and the United Nations worked for calm, and this time Burundi did not explode.)

Habyarimana's death consolidated the Hutu Power leaders and their followers as he had never been able to do in life. No longer the traitor who had made peace with the R.P.F., the martyred leader became the patron saint of the genocide. Rwanda is predominantly Catholic, and five weeks after the President's death Radio Rwanda reported that a renowned local visionary had had a colloquy with the Virgin Mary, in which the Virgin indicated that Habyarimana was with her in Heaven, and that she approved the killing of Tutsis.

Three days after Habyarimana's assassination, Théodore Sindikubwabo, a pediatrician who was also the speaker of the Assembly at the time, was installed as President by the military. Sindikubwabo is from Butare, where he lived in a large villa. Although many of his former patients were killed last year, I met several survivors who recalled him from their childhoods, and they told me that he was a good doctor.

At the outbreak of the killings, Butare was the only district in Rwanda with a Tutsi prefect. While leaders elsewhere rallied their constituencies to massacre, this prefect, Jean-Baptiste Habyalimana, urged restraint. His example illustrates the power that authority figures exercised over Rwanda's population. For the first twelve days of the killing, Butare was calm, and Tutsis fleeing massacres elsewhere flocked to the district. Then Sindikubwabo visited Butare. He fired the prefect (who was subsequently killed) and held a rally. The next day, soldiers of the Presidential Guard were flown in, buses and trucks carrying militia and arms arrived, and the slaughter began. Some of the most extensive massacres of the genocide occurred in Butare: in just two or three weeks, at least twenty thousand Tutsis were killed in Cyahinda Parish, and at least thirty-five thousand in Karama Parish.

Sindikubwabo's old villa in Butare has since been smashed into a heap of stones, but he has a new one, in an exclusive enclave of Bukavu, Zaire, where he lives as President in exile. The property commands a stunning view of the hills of Rwanda across Lake Kivu. Two black Rwandan-government Mercedes sedans stood in the drive when I stopped by, on a May morning, and a man at the gate introduced himself as Sindikubwabo's chief of protocol. He said that the press was always welcome, because the world must know that Hutus were Rwanda's true victims. "Look at us in exile," he said. Then he volunteered the opinion that Sindikubwabo is an innocent man, and asked me whether I believed in the idea of innocence until guilt is proved. I said I didn't know that Sindikubwabo had been charged with any crimes in any courts of law, and he told me that all Rwandan refugees were waiting for the judgment of the international tribunal. But, he asked, "Who is this tribunal? Who is influencing them? Who are they serving? Are they interested in the truth or only in avoiding reality?"

The chief of protocol told me to wait where I was, and after a while André Nkurunziza, Sindikubwabo's press attaché, took his place. Nkurunziza wanted to brief me before I talked to Sindikubwabo. "This is a government hurt by a media conspiracy that labels it a government of genocide," he said. "But these are not people who killed anyone. We hear them called planners, but these are only rumors planted by Kigali. Even you, when you go to Kigali, they could pay you money to write what they want." He put out a hand to touch my forearm soothingly. "I don't say that they did pay you. It's just an example."

Eventually, I was taken in to Sindikubwabo, who sat in his modestly furnished living room. He had a strikingly asymmetrical face, divided by a thick scar that drew his mouth up in a diagonal sneer. When I said that he was often mentioned as a chief instigator of the massacres in Butare, and asked what he could tell me about that, he gave a dry, breathy chuckle.

"The moment has not yet come to say who is guilty and who is not guilty," he said. "The R.P.F. can bring accusations against it doesn't matter whom, and they can formulate these accusations it doesn't matter how—reassembling, stitching together, making a montage of the witnesses." His face began to twitch around his scar. "This becomes a bit of comedy that will be sorted out before the tribunal. I come from Butare, and I know what I said in Butare, and the people of Butare also know what I said."

But he refused to tell me what he had said. "If the mayors of Butare affirm that the massacres began under my order, they are responsible, because it was their responsibility to maintain order," Sindikubwabo said. "If they interpreted my message as a command, they executed a command against my words." I said I wondered why he didn't correct them, since he was the President and a doctor, and hundreds of thousands of people had been killed in his country. He said that if the time came he would answer that question in court.

A portrait of President Habyarimana hung behind Sindikubwabo. The dead leader—buttoned up in military dress and draped with braid—looked much happier than the exiled leader, and it seemed to me that as a dead man he did have the happier position. To his people, Habyarimana was the true President—many Hutus in the refugee camps of Zaire, Tanzania, and Burundi told me so—whereas Sindikubwabo was regarded as a nobody. "He is President of nothing," several refugees said—a man who had filled the job opening for only a brief, unfortunate moment. Now he was spurned by the world and could do his people no good. To his enemies, too, Sindikubwabo was a nobody; R.P.F. leaders and genocide survivors saw him as an attendant lord, plucked from the lower echelons of Hutu Power at the moment of crisis precisely because he had no standing and seemed content to play the puppet. As for Habyarimana, he was still despised by his enemies, for they believed that the genocide was committed not only in his name but in his spirit, and, perhaps (aside from his assassination), even by his design.

Sitting with Sindikubwabo as he offered what sounded like a dry run of the defense he was preparing, I had the impression that he almost yearned to be indicted, even apprehended, in order to have a final hour in the spotlight, and I realized that Habyarimana still owned Hutu Power. The wild gamble of the genocide—that his death would bring his people to life—had backfired. Leaderless, the people had run amok; that had been the plan. But with no single commander to run the show, the twin demands of completing the extermination and repelling the R.P.F. had proved too much for the genocidal clique. As the Hutu Power leaders changed their message to the masses from an order to kill in self-defense to an order to flee for their lives, more than two million Hutus, many of whom had demonstrated their readiness to kill, abandoned their country before a rebel army of some thirty thousand.

The obvious question would seem to be: What had gone wrong? But the genocidal movement had been billed from the start as a resistance to Tutsi aggression. By starting the war, the line went, the R.P.F. had invited the genocide. In yielding Rwanda to the R.P.F., the Hutu Power leaders could retain control of the mobs on whom they depended, and say that their fears were justified.

"You have to transport yourself into the twenty-first century and wonder what all this will look like," says Jacques Franquin, a Belgian, who had been a field officer of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Ngara, Tanzania, since the first Hutu refugees flooded over the border, in June of 1994. "In fifty or sixty years, what will we say? Probably that the influx of refugees was organized, that they came because they knew there would be some relief while they reorganized themselves."

By contrast, the Harvard psychiatrist Richard Mollica says, "In Rwanda, the new government is being demonized now. It's just fascinating how the perpetrators become the victims."

SINCE the R.P.F. came to power in July of 1994, and installed what it called a Broad Based Government of National Unity, some eight hundred thousand diaspora Tutsis (with one million cows) have returned to Rwanda—roughly a one-to-one replacement of the dead. The R.P.F. had never really expected to win Rwanda on the battlefield, and the irony is not lost on Rwanda's new leaders that the genocide actually handed them more power. Yet, even so, they cannot properly declare victory. The enemy wasn't defeated; it just ran away, and the country it left behind was so ravaged and divided that it was guaranteed to present its new rulers with temptations to extremism and revenge.

The new government included a Hutu President and a Hutu Prime Minister. Hutu Power leaders in exile proclaimed the Hutus in the government to be puppets, since the R.P.F.'s military, renamed the Rwandese Patriotic Army (R.P.A.), and now at a strength of forty thousand men, still remained under Tutsi control. When the government abolished the despised system of ethnic-identity cards, which had served as death tickets for Tutsis during the genocide, Hutu Power leaders pointed out that Tutsis, and especially R.P.A. soldiers, seemed to have no problem identifying Hutus for the revenge killings that were reported to be taking place in Rwanda on a daily basis, or for arrest as suspected participants in the genocide.

"This gang made a genocide, then they say Hutu-Tutsi, Hutu-Tutsi, and everything is a genocide to them," Major General Paul Kagame, an R.P.F. leader who is now Vice-President and Minister of Defense, told me. "I'm saying we have problems. I'm saying things are ugly. But if we take everything to mean the same, then we are making a mistake."

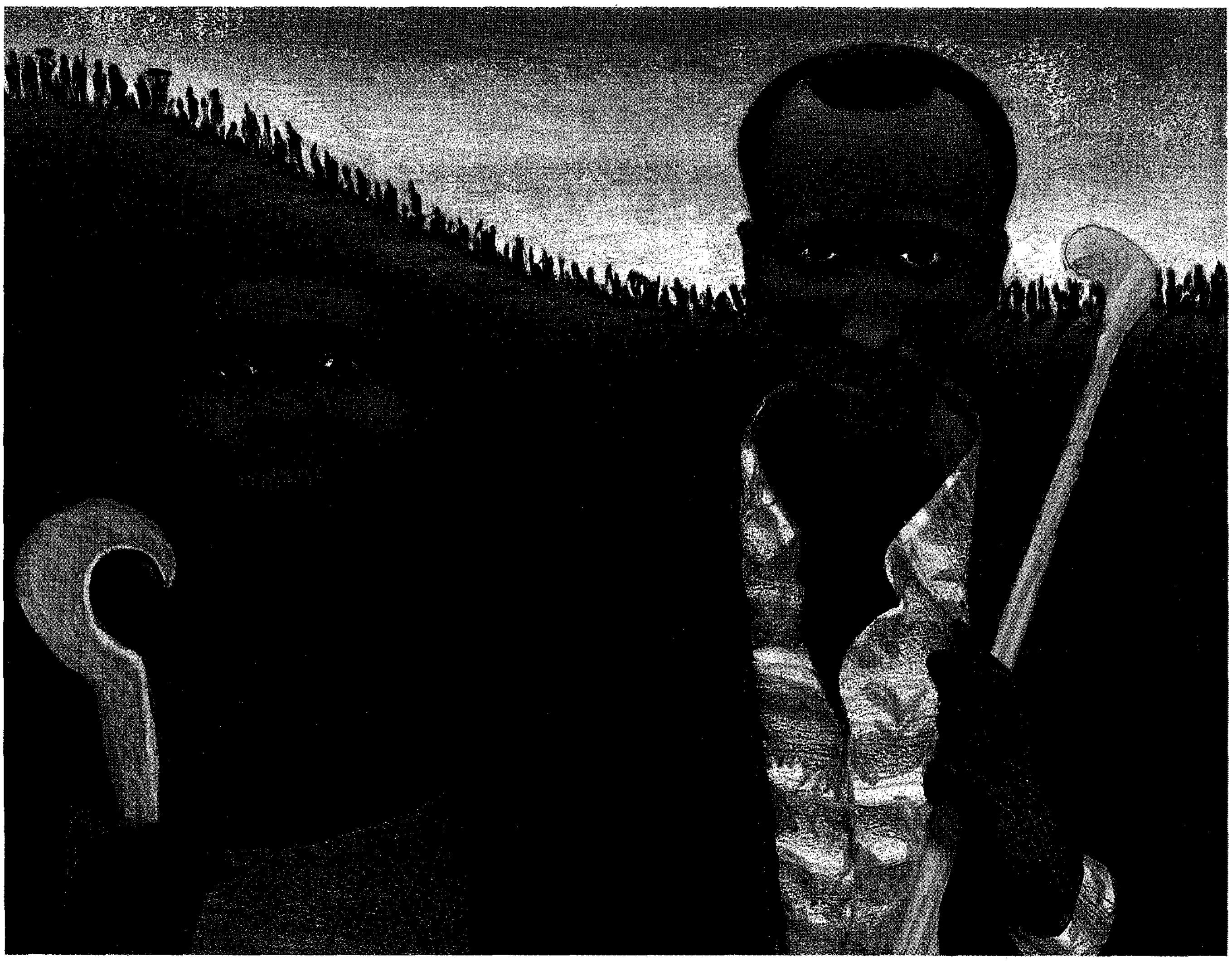
The ugliest killing since the genocide ended took place in late April of this year, when R.P.A. soldiers began slaughtering Hutus at a camp for internally displaced people in the village of Kibeho, in southern Rwanda. The Kibeho camp was the last of several camps that together had held about four hundred thousand Hutus who fled their homes at the end of the genocide but hadn't made it into exile. The other camps had been closed, and their occupants sent back to their villages, with a minimum of chaos. But at Kibeho the closing operation went awry, and, after a five-day standoff, eighty thousand Hutus surged toward the R.P.A. soldiers. The soldiers responded by firing for hours into the stampeding crowd. The R.P.A.'s conduct was unrestrained; in addition to machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and at least one mortar were fired. Eyewitnesses from the United Nations and international relief agencies counted between two thousand and four thousand bodies—many of people trampled to death in the stampede. But the numbers were only estimates; the thickness of bodies on the ground in some places made it impossible to navigate the camp, and the R.P.A. obstructed access. The Rwandan government put the body count at three hundred and thirty-four. An international commission of inquiry on Kibeho, convened by the Rwandan government, established that the killings resulted from a failure of the R.P.A. command structure rather than from design, and the Rwandan government has said that a high-ranking R.P.A. officer has been jailed and is facing court-martial for his role at Kibeho.

The wholesale killing at Kibeho placed Rwanda on the world's front pages again, and it played as the usual story: the tribe in power slaughtering the disempowered tribe. The massacre was just what the Hutu Power forces in exile had been waiting for—proof positive, their pamphleteers declared, that the R.P.F. was Rwanda's true genocidal aggressor. Kibeho also dealt a blow to the confidence of foreign observers who had been well disposed toward Rwanda's new regime. In Butare, Fery Aalam, a Swiss delegate of the Red Cross, who had been in Rwanda throughout the killings, told me, "Last year, when nobody in the world tried to stop the genocide, and I saw the first R.P.F. officer coming to liberate Rwanda, these guys were heroes—I went straight to shake his hand. After Kibeho, I don't know if I'd put out my hand first."

At the time I arrived in Rwanda, in May, at least thirty-three thousand men, women, and children had been arrested for alleged participation in genocide. By the time I left, in August, the number had climbed to forty thousand. Today, there are sixty thousand prisoners, the great majority of whom are packed into thirteen central prisons built to house twelve thousand.

Rwanda's prisons have no guards, and only a few soldiers outside the gates—both the prisoners and the soldiers are considered safer this way—and although nearly all the inmates are alleged murderers, fights are said to be rare and killings unheard of. The prisons have not elicited favorable press. They are widely viewed as a human-rights catastrophe, and since my visit access has been limited.

The prisoners are generally calm and orderly. They greet visitors amiably, often with smiles and hands extended for a shake. In the women's block at the central prison of Kigali, three hundred and forty women lay about, barely clad in the stuffy heat; babies crawled underfoot; and two inmate nuns in crisp white habits conducted a prayer service in a corner. In the Butare prison, old men stood in the yard in a downpour with bits of plastic over their heads, while young boys were scrunched together in a cell, singing a chorus of "Alouette." In the men's block of the Kigali prison, I was conducted past acrobatic and choral



The European colonizers favored the archetypically taller, lighter-skinned Tutsis over the Hutus. In the nineteen-thirties, the Belgians established an identity-card system that was effectively a form of apartheid.

groups, three men reading "Tintin," and a scout troop by the captain of the prisoners and his adjutant, who wielded a short baton to clear a path through the throng of prisoners, squatting at our feet. The captain kept calling out, "Here's a journalist from the United States," and the huddled men clapped. It occurred to me that this was the famous mob mentality of blind obedience to authority which is often described in attempts to explain genocide.

Between visits to prisons, I stopped by to see General Kagame, at the Vice-President's office in the Ministry of Defense. I was wondering why the government exposed itself to bad press about the prisons, and how he interpreted the prisoners' apparent calm acceptance of their horrible conditions. Kagame, who cuts a Giacometti-like stick figure and is generally regarded as the most powerful man in the government, had a question of his own: "If a million people died here, who killed them?"

"A lot of people," I said.

"Yes," he said. "Have you found many that admit they participated?"

I hadn't. Every prisoner I spoke with claimed to have been arbitrarily and unjustly arrested, and, in every case, the claim was entirely possible. I asked Kagame if it bothered him that there might be innocent people in jail. "Yeah," he said. "But that was the way to deal with the situation. If we would have lost these people through revenge, that would have even been a bigger problem for us. I would rather address the problem of putting them in prison, because that is the best way to do it for the process of justice, and simply because I don't want them out there, because people would actually kill them."

In July, Rwanda's National Commission of Triage—a sporadically functioning body charged with locating prisoners against whom the accusations seem insubstantial—ordered the release of Placide Koloni from the prison at Gitarama, an hour's drive south of Kigali. Koloni, a Hutu, who had held the office of deputy prefect before, during, and after the genocide, had been arrested on February 15th. He was released on July 20th, and he returned to his office on July 24th. On the night of July 27th, a sentry in a U.N. brigade saw some men enter Koloni's house. A scream was heard, and the house exploded in flames. Koloni, his wife and their two daughters, and a domestic were killed. A week later, a Hutu deputy prefect in Gikongoro, just west of Butare, was shot to death, and a Catholic priest in Kamonyi Parish, not far from Kigali, was also shot to death, and dumped in a banana field. It was a tense week in Rwanda, but only because the victims were prominent civic leaders; rumors and reports of at least a dozen killings circulate each week in the country. General Kagame, who never tired of pointing out that some four hundred R.P.A. soldiers were in military jails for such crimes (today, the number is seven hundred), told me that soldiers are not the only Rwandans frustrated to the point of criminality. "But given the situation you have here, ordinary crimes are not going to be looked at as ordinary crimes," he said.

Kagame's distinction offers little comfort to frightened Hutus, who live under a cloud of collective suspicion. "When we see they are killed, we'd rather be in here than out there," a detainee told me at Gitarama prison, which last summer was known as Rwanda's worst prison. More than six thousand men were packed in a space built for seven hundred and fifty. That meant four prisoners per square metre: night and day, the prisoners had to stand, or to sit between the legs of those who stood, and even in the dry season a scum of dampness, urine, and bits of dropped food covered the floor. The cramped prisoners' feet and ankles, and sometimes their entire legs, swelled to two or three times normal size. They suffered from an atrophying of the swollen extremities, and from rot, and from assorted infections; hundreds had required amputations.

Lieutenant Colonel R. V. Blanchette, a United Nations military observer from Canada, told me in early July about his first visit to Gitarama prison. "I went down in the back with my flashlight," he said, "and I saw this guy's foot. I'd heard it was pretty bad in there, but this was quite ugly—very swollen, and his little toe was missing. I shined my flashlight up to his face, and he reached down and just snapped off the next toe."

When I visited Gitarama prison a few weeks after Blanchette's encounter, prisoners told me that conditions were much improved—that the Red Cross, which supplies the food for Rwanda's central prisons, had installed duckboards and evacuated the worst medical cases. "We had eighty-six deaths in June, and in July only eighteen," a doctor at the prison clinic told me. On the day of my visit, six thousand four hundred and twenty-four prisoners formed a solid-looking knot. As the assistant director of the prison led me in, the mass parted slightly to make a path. It was difficult to figure out how the people fitted together—which limbs went with which body, or why a head appeared to have grown three legs without a torso in between. Many of the feet were badly swollen. The bodies were clad in rags.

Pressing through the throng, I received the usual welcoming smiles and handshakes. In the children's cell, sixty-three boys, ranging in age from seven to sixteen, sat in rows on the floor, facing a blackboard where an older prisoner—a schoolteacher by profession—was conducting a lesson. They looked like schoolboys anywhere. I asked one why he was in prison. "They say I killed," he replied. "I didn't." Other children gave the same answer, with downcast eyes, evasive, unconvincing. But who knows? Rwanda's formal arrest procedures are rarely followed in the current emergency; it is generally enough for someone to point a finger and say, "Genocide." Luc Côté, a lawyer from Montreal who was directing the Butare field office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, told me, "Most of the arrests are founded on some type of evidence," which means that they may not be arbitrary even if they are technically incorrect.

Even if legal procedures were followed to the letter, it's not clear what difference that would make, since Rwanda's courts are closed, and no trials have been conducted or are currently planned. The government says it lacks the financial and human resources to open the courts—many of Rwanda's lawyers are dead or in prison themselves. But nobody talks seriously about conducting sixty thousand murder trials in Rwanda. "It's materially impossible to judge all those who participated in the massacres, and politically it's no good, even though it's just," Tito Rutaremara, an R.P.F. genocide investigator, told me. "This was a true genocide, and the only correct response is true justice. But Rwanda has the death penalty, and that would mean a lot more killing."

In other words, a true genocide and true justice are incompatible. Rwanda's new leaders see their way around this problem by describing the genocide as a crime committed by masterminds and slave bodies. Neither party can be regarded as innocent, but if the crime is political, and if justice is to serve the political good, then the punishment has to draw a line that would sever the criminal minds from the criminal bodies. "Inherently, the people are not bad," General Kagame told me. "But they can be made bad, and they can be taught to be good." At a press conference, he explained that "long ago" Rwandan justice was conducted in village hearings, where fines were the preferred penalties. "The guy who made the crime can give some salt or something, and that can bring the people back together," Kagame said.

Salt for genocide?

"When you speak of justice with our peasants, the big idea is compensation," the lawyer François-Xavier Nkurunziza told me. "You can kill the man who committed genocide, but that's not compensation—that's only fear and anger. This is how our peasants think."

Government leaders talk of public-works programs and political education; the key to reconstruction, they say, is for perpetrators to acknowledge that they have done wrong. In theory, Kigali's proposed approach is similar to that of de-Nazification in postwar, and post-Nuremberg, Germany. But the justice at Nuremberg was brought by foreign conquerors, and de-Nazification in Germany was conceived with the understanding that the group that had been killed would never again have to live side by side with the killers. Rwanda offers no such tidy arrangement. "Right now, if you were to give an amnesty you would be inviting chaos," said Charles Murigande, the chairman of Rwanda's Presidential Commission on Accountability for the Genocide. "But, if we could put our hands on the leaders, even an amnesty would be very well received."

That is a very big "if." Shortly after the genocide, in the summer of 1994, the Rwandan government appealed to the United Nations for help in apprehending the authors of the genocide who had fled into exile. The U.N. responded by creating the International Tribunal for Rwanda, which is essentially a satellite of the Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal. "We asked for help to catch these people who ran away, and to try them properly in our own courts," a Rwandan diplomat told me. "And the Security Council just started writing 'Rwanda' in under the name 'Yugoslavia' everywhere." The Rwanda tribunal is understaffed and its funding has been slow in coming. The fact that it is only now promising to indict a few fugitives is regarded in Kigali as proof not that the system is working but that it is not serious.

The majority of the genocidal fugitives live in Zaire and Kenya—states whose leaders, Mobutu Sese Seko and Daniel arap Moi, were intimates of Habyarimana and today often play host to his widow in their palaces. Habyarimana's remains are buried on the grounds of one of Mobutu's estates. The old-boy club of African strongmen protects its own, and seems eager to demonstrate that the notion of international law is spineless and an affront to sovereignty. In June, when I asked Honoré Rakotomanana, a Madagascan who is the Rwanda tribunal's deputy prosecutor, how he expected to extradite anybody from Zaire or Kenya, he said, "There are international treaties to which those countries are signatories. Those are the instruments by which we operate." In early October, however, President Moi assailed the tribunal as a "haphazard process," and announced, "I shall not allow any one of them to enter Kenya to serve summonses and look for people here. No way. If any such characters come here, they will be arrested. We must respect ourselves. We must not be harassed."

Kenya has since made conciliatory noises, but even if a genocidal leader were handed over to the tribunal it is unlikely that Rwandan leaders would stand up and cheer. The tribunal has no power to recommend a death penalty, and Tito Rutaremara told me, "It doesn't fit our definition of justice to think of the authors of the Rwandan genocide sitting in a Swedish prison with a television and *tout confort.*" According to General Kagame, when Rwanda protested that the tribunal should carry the death penalty, out of respect for Rwanda's laws, the United Nations advised Rwanda to abolish *its* death penalty. To abolish the death penalty after the genocide "seems cynical," General Kagame said at a press conference.

A CONFUSED REACTION

What is a humanitarian response to a genocide?

SHORTLY after my conversation with Kagame, I ran into an American military-intelligence officer, who was having a supper of Jack Daniel's and Coca-Cola at a Kigali bar. "I hear you're interested in genocide," he said. "Do you know what genocide is?"

I asked him to tell me.

"A cheese sandwich," he said. "Write it down. Genocide is a cheese sandwich."

I asked him how he figured that.

"What does anyone care about a year-old cheese sandwich?" he said. "Genocide, genocide, genocide. Cheese sandwich, cheese sandwich, cheese sandwich. Who gives a shit? Crimes against humanity—where's humanity? Who's humanity? You? Me? Did you see a crime committed against you? Hey, just a million Rwandans. Did you ever hear about the Genocide Convention?"

I said I had. It was passed by the United Nations in 1948, in the days after Nuremberg; it has been ratified by scores of countries; and it says that they will all undertake to prevent and punish genocide if it should ever happen again. "That convention," the American at the bar said, "makes a nice wrapping for a cheese sandwich."

For a time, in June, 1994, as the killing continued in Rwanda, the Clinton Administration instructed its officials to avoid calling it a genocide, although the possibility that "acts of genocide may have occurred" was acknowledged. "There are obligations which arise in connection with the use of the term [genocide]," Christine Shelly, a State Department spokeswoman, explained at the time. On April 21st of that year, two weeks after the slaughter of Tutsis began, General Roméo Dallaire, the Canadian commander of the U.N. force in Rwanda, had announced that he could end the genocide with between five thousand and eight thousand troops. Instead, the Security Council cut Dallaire's existing force, of two thousand five hundred, to two hundred and seventy. Dallaire's claim that vigorous intervention could have prevented hundreds of thousands of deaths is now widely held as obvious; a Western military source familiar with the region told me that a few thousand soldiers with tanks and big guns could have knocked out the radio, closed off Rwanda's main roads, and shut down the genocide in one or two days.

Later, when United Nations and international relief agencies rushed in to wrestle with the humanitarian disasters that the genocide had created, they quickly discovered that there was nothing much to be done except bury the bodies. The crisis among the living was the crisis of the refugees, and the overwhelming portion of humanitarian assistance went to creating and sustaining the sprawling network of camps for fleeing Hutus in Zaire, Tanzania, and Burundi.

John Keys, an American who ran the Kigali office of the American Refugee Committee, a private relief organization, had previously worked in the camps in Goma, Zaire, where he had felt deeply compromised. Many of those camps were controlled by *interahamwe* bands, and it had distressed Keys to find himself helping to support a genocidal political movement. "There's a right and a wrong in this case," he told me. "If neutrality is the ideal for the humanitarian community even in the face of genocide, then the humanitarian community has a lot of thinking to do."

Jacques Franquin, of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, agrees that the Rwandan crisis is a political crisis that requires political solutions, but he did not believe that was a matter for humanitarian aid workers to concern themselves about. Franquin supervised camps that held more than five hundred thousand Rwandan Hutus, and he said he had no doubt that there were genocidal criminals among them. "But don't ask me to sort them out," he told me. "Don't ask me to take the criminals out of the camps and put humanitarian workers in danger."

Charles Murigande, of Rwanda's accountability commission, told me, "The international tribunal was created essentially to appease the conscience of the international community, which has failed to live up to its conventions on genocide. It wants to look as if it were doing something, which is often worse than doing nothing at all."

Murigande's sentiment was prevalent among Rwanda's leaders. "If the international community is coming, there's no way you can stop it," General Kagame told me. "But in the long run it creates a bigger problem, because room is created for a manipulation to make the genocide that took place here less and less visible as a very big crime that people should be hunted for and prosecuted for."

Officials of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees say that ninety-five per cent of the Hutu refugees who have returned to their villages in Rwanda have done so without being arrested or attacked. As I toured the camps that ring Rwanda, however, every one of hundreds of refugees I spoke with told me precisely the opposite—that at least ninety-five per cent of those who returned had been killed or jailed.

Everywhere I went, inside Rwanda and in the border camps, to R.P.F. leaders and to Hutu Power leaders, to relief workers and to prisoners, I was told that there would be another war, and soon. At the end of October, the United Nations reported that armed forays into Rwanda by Hutu refugees from Zaire had increased. On November 7th, the Rwandan government announced that it had overrun a deeply entrenched Hutu military and militia camp on Iwawa Island, between Rwanda and Zaire, on Lake Kivu. The battle lasted several days. The Hutu forces, whose arsenal included antitank cannons and anti-aircraft guns and a large cache of high-tech antipersonnel mines, were described in wire-service dispatches as "Hutu rebels," just as the R.P.F. used to be described as "Tutsi rebels." In response to the escalation of military activity there and elsewhere, United Nations agencies began stockpiling food and other supplies to draw on in the event of vast population movements. But the U.N.'s role in Rwanda is more in doubt than ever; when the peacekeeping mandate expired on December 8th, the Rwandan government, which has regarded the blue helmets' presence as an insult to its sovereignty, asked that it not be renewed, and Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said he would honor the request. President Mobutu of Zaire has been threatening, in an on-again, off-again way, to force more than a million Rwandan Hutus out of his country at the end of this year, and there is little doubt that if he chose to do so he could clear the camps. Last week, Kigali expelled dozens of relief agencies—mostly those with ties to France—and Burundi, which holds two hundred thousand Rwandan refugees, was torn by heavy fighting.

As I followed these developments from afar, I was struck once again by the simple tactical brilliance of the Hutu Power forces. A renewed war, after all, could easily force the genocide out of memory. Observers close to the Rwandan scene fear that a war could trigger reprisals against Hutus within Rwanda; prison massacres are a favorite scenario. And then who could talk of genocide? In a war of all against all, it is impossible to take sides, and the authors of the Rwandan genocide seem to have understood that what the so-called international community likes best is situations in which it can proclaim its neutrality.

"History is full of long wars," Jacques Franquin told me. "That is how history is made. Now we have the humanitarian system and fast information, so we can stop people from killing each other—and good that we can. But what are we really doing? And where are we really going?"

THE FUTURE

Was the killing a prelude for worse to come?

THE expectation that a new war could spark a regional conflict involving Zaire, Tanzania, and Burundi raises the prospect of bloodshed on a scale that would make last year's horror seem a mere prelude. What makes this strange is that a new war would be a war *about* the genocide; for, while Hutu Power still seeks to make its crime a success by making it indistinguishable from the continuum of Rwandan history, the R.P.F. and the new government it leads depend on the genocide to justify their rule.

"This is a minority government, coming from a diaspora," Fery Aalam, the Swiss Red Cross delegate, told me. "The genocide is the source of its credibility, and for the time being all political thinking is based on military logic, not on social or economic or humanitarian logic. It is like the military logic of Israel for a long time, and to a large extent, as with Israel, it's justified."

When I saw General Kagame, I asked him if Israel's experience corresponded in any way with his own country's. "Maybe in terms of persecution and exile," he said. Kagame was born in Rwanda, but from the age of four until he forced his way into Kigali last year he lived in Uganda. "The whole world is now up in arms about these refugees, but for over thirty years *we* were refugees, and nobody talked about us. People forgot. They said, 'Go to hell.' It's a question of rights. Do you deny that I belong to Rwanda, that I am a Rwandan?"

Kagame thumped the arm of his chair rhythmically. He was opening up a vein: resentment, the feeling of being an outcast, even in his big, Vice-Presidential office in Kigali. "We came here," he said. "We took power, we overthrew the regime, we tried to do our best to bring the people of Rwanda together. But the others come and say, 'Ah, the Tutsi-dominated government.' " He laughed. "I am sorry to define people by their ethnic background, that's not my business and intention at all, but the President is Hutu, the Prime Minister is one—oh, but there is a Vice-President somewhere who is a Tutsi. So this is the man in charge."

I said, "You won the war."

"My business was to fight," Kagame said. "I fought. The war is over. I said, 'Let's share power.' If I weren't sincere, I would have taken over everything." His plea for understanding suddenly seemed to carry a threat. He said, "If I wanted to be a problem, I would actually be a problem. I don't have to dance around weeping, you see."

Not long after this conversation, I was approached in Kigali by a man who had long been privy to the workings of Rwandan power and was himself now in the government. He told me that he wanted to be completely honest about what was going on in the country, but on an anonymous basis. He was a Hutu, and travelled with a Kalashnikov-toting soldier in tow. "Listen," he said. "Rwanda had a dictatorship, Rwanda had a genocide, and now Rwanda has a very serious threat on the borders. You don't have to be R.P.F. to understand what that means. You don't have to fall into the old thinking—that if you're not with these guys you're with those guys." The man went on to explain at length his view that Rwandans cannot be trusted. "Foreigners cannot know this place," he said. "We cheat. We repeat the same little things to you over and over and tell you nothing. Even among ourselves, we lie. We have a habit of secrecy and suspicion. You can stay a whole year and you will not know what Rwandans think or what they are doing."

I told him that this didn't fully surprise me, because I had the impression that Rwandans spoke two languages—not Kinyarwanda and French or English but one language among themselves and another with outsiders. By way of an example, I said that I had spoken with a Rwandan lawyer who had described the difficulty of integrating his European training into his Rwandan practice. He loved the Cartesian, Napoleonic legal system, on which Rwanda's is modelled, but he said that it didn't correspond to Rwandan reality, which was for him an equally complete system of thought. By the same token, when this lawyer spoke with me about Rwanda, he used a language quite different from the language he would speak with fellow-Rwandans.

"You talk about this," my visitor said, "and at the same time you say, 'A lawyer told me such-and-such.' A Rwandan would never tell you what someone else said, and, normally, when you told a Rwandan what you had heard from somebody he would immediately change the rhythm of his speech and close himself off to you. He would be on his guard." He looked up and studied me for a moment. "You Westerners are so honest," he said. He seemed depressed by the notion.

"I'm telling you," he said. "Rwandans are petty." I wasn't sure of the French word that he used for "petty," which was *mesquin*. When I asked him to explain it, he described someone who sounded remarkably like Iago—a confidence man, a cheater and betrayer and liar, who tries to tell everyone what he imagines they want to hear in order to maintain his own game and get what he is after. Colonel Doctor Joseph Karemera, a founding officer of the R.P.F. who is now Rwanda's Minister of Health, told me that there is a Rwandan word for such behavior. Having described the legacy of thirty-four years of Hutu Power dictatorship as "a very bad mentality," Karemera said, "In Kinyarwanda we call it *ikinamucho*—that if you want to do something you are deceitful and not straight. For example, you can come to kill me"—he clutched his throat—"and your mission is successful, but then you cry. That is *ikinamucho.*"

My visitor liked the word *mesquin.* He used it repeatedly. I remarked that he didn't seem to have a very high opinion of his people. "I'm trying to tell you about them without lying," he said.

A FEW days before I was to leave Kigali, I ran into Edmond Mrugamba, a man I had come to know around town, and he invited me to join him for a visit to a latrine into which his sister and her family had been thrown during the genocide. He had mentioned the story before, and I remembered that he made a sound—"*tcha, tcha, tcha*"—and chopped his hand in the air to describe his sister's killing.

Edmond drove a Mercedes, one of the few still left in Rwanda, and he was wearing a faded denim shirt and jeans and black cowboy boots. He used to work for a German firm, and his wife was German; she had remained in Berlin with their children after the genocide. As we drove, in the direction of the airport, Edmond told me that he was a well-travelled man, and that after many trips in East Africa and in Europe he had always felt that Rwandans were the nicest, most decent people in the world. Edmond spoke quietly, with great intensity, and his face was expressive in a subtle, wincing way. He had never imagined the ugliness, the meanness—"the disease," he said—that had afflicted Rwanda, and he could not understand how it could have been so well masked.

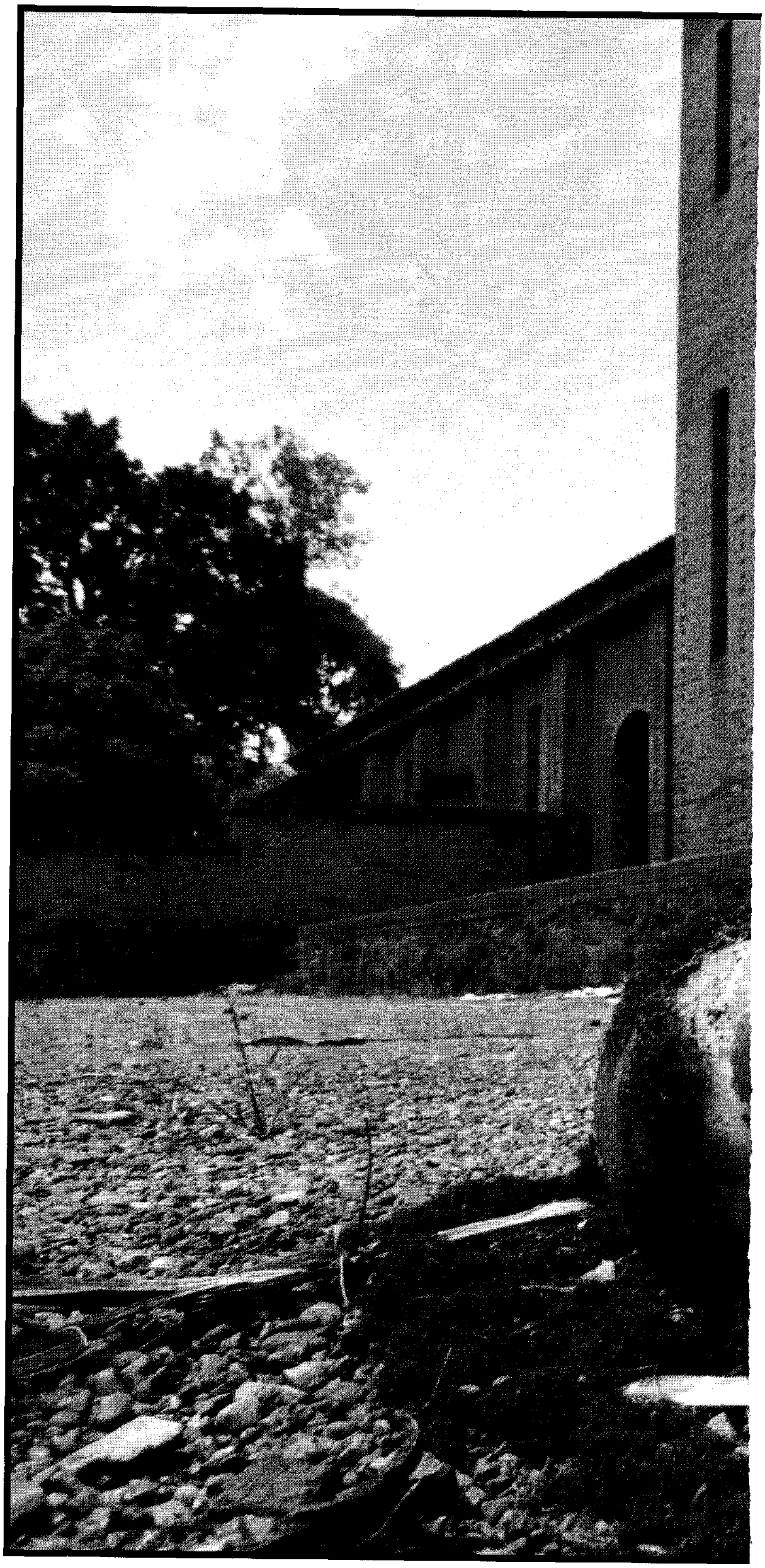
Near the outskirts of Kigali, we turned onto a red dirt track that descended between high reed fences surrounding modest homes. A blue metal gate leading to his sister's house stood open. The yard was crackly dry bush strewn with rubble. A family of squatters—Tutsis just returned from Burundi—sat in the living room, playing Scrabble. Edmond ignored them. He led me around the side of the house, to a stand of dried-out banana plants. There were two holes in the ground, about a foot apart and three feet in diameter—neat, deep, machine-dug wells. Edmond grabbed hold of a bush, leaned out over the holes, and said, "You can see the tibias." I did as he did, and saw the bones.

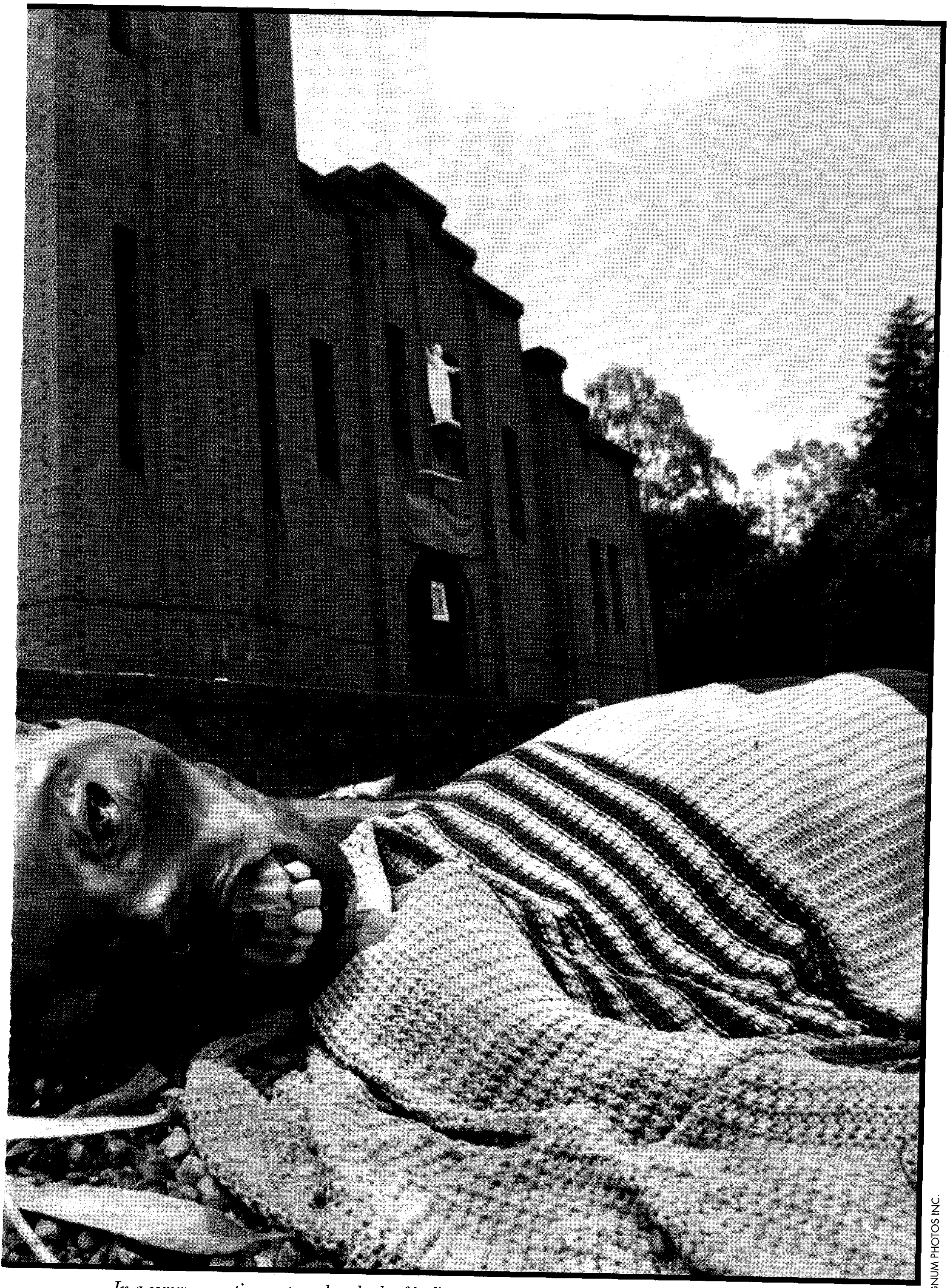
"Fourteen metres deep," Edmond said. He told me that his brother-in-law had been a religious man, and on the twelfth of April last year, when the *interahamwe* came to his house, he had prevailed upon the killers to let him pray. After his prayers, Edmond's brother-in-law told the militiamen that he didn't want his family dismembered, so they invited him to throw his children down the latrine wells alive, and he did. Then Edmond's sister and his brother-in-law were thrown in on top.

Edmond took his camera out of a plastic bag and photographed the holes. "People come to Rwanda and talk of reconciliation," he said. "It's offensive. Imagine talking to Jews of reconciliation in 1946. Maybe in a long time, but it's a private matter." He reminded me that he had lost a brother as well as his sister and her family. Then he told me that he knew who his brother's killer was, and that he sometimes saw the man around Kigali.

"I'd like to talk to him," Edmond said. "I want him to explain to me what this thing was, how he could do this thing. My surviving sister said, 'Let's denounce him.' I saw what was happening—a wave of arrests all at once—and I said, 'What good is prison, if he doesn't feel what I feel? Let him live in fear.' When the time is right, I want to make him understand that I'm not asking for his arrest but for him to live forever with what he has done. I'm asking for him to think about it for the rest of his life. It's a kind of psychological torture."

Edmond had thought of himself as a Rwandan—he identified his spirit with that of his people—but after the genocide he had lost that mooring. Now, to prove himself his brother's keeper, he wanted to fix his brother's killer with the mark of Cain. I couldn't help thinking how well Cain had prospered: he founded the first city, and, though we don't like to talk about it all that much, we are all his children. ♦





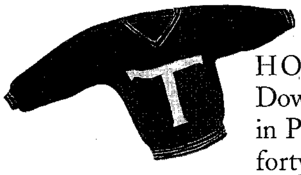
MAGNUM PHOTOS INC.

In a commemorative gesture, hundreds of bodies have been left where they fell at Nyarubuye.

FICTION

LUNCH HOUR

BY JOHN UPDIKE



THOUGH Allen Dow had not lived in Pennsylvania for forty years, he always attended his high-school class reunions, which were held once every five years. The basic treasure of his life was buried back there, in the town of Olinger, and he kept hoping to uncover it. Julia Reidenhauser, on the other hand, hadn't attended a reunion for decades, not since those first low-budget get-togethers the class committee put on at the Wenrich Grove picnic grounds and the Schenktown V.F.W., when they all could still fit into their high-school clothes and still meant most of the real world to one another. "Julia is here this year—with Doris, of course," Mamie Kauffman told him.

Mamie had grown round as a muffin and her little clever dimpled hands—she had been "artistic" and had hoped to become a fashion designer—were bent by arthritis, but she still had the starry-eyed sweetness, the touchingly relieved happiness to be here, to have *arrived*, that she had when her mother would walk her hand in hand to the old elementary school on the Alton Pike, and boost her up onto the three-foot retaining wall that separated the asphalt playground from the sidewalk. It wasn't a playground, exactly: although the children played on it at recess it had no swings or slides or basketball hoops, just a few half-erased white lines and circles painted on it. Only the teachers knew the games and rules that went with those markings. The asphalt encircled the building like a broad moat, and was strictly divided into the boys' and girls' halves, with a cement walkway, front and back, as the dividing line. Everything was symmetrical and strict at the old elementary school except for the bobbing, squirming, tittering, runny-nosed, queasy-tummied, nervous-bladdered students, kindergarten through sixth grade.

"You're kidding," Allen said, but knew she wasn't; Mamie's eyes, smaller than the eyes she had had in grade school, glittered mischievously with this gift she was giving him. She was class secretary and had been the heart of the reunion committee ever since there were reunions, plotting how to inveigle each one of the hundred and twelve class members to attend. "How did you get her to come?" he asked.

Mamie took an unexpected offended tone. "I didn't. I'm through with begging, Allen. I used to beg Julia, and about a dozen others that I knew would have a swell time, you know, if they deigned, but now I figure, Send out the invitations and let those that want to come come. We're all adults, God knows." They were all over sixty; they had graduated forty-five years ago, the June the Korean War started. Seven of the hundred and twelve, by the secretary's accounting, were already dead. Yet all around him, through a mist of gray hair and wrinkles and body fat, Allen saw children's faces, rising essentially unchanged up through the grades. Mamie added, "Betty Lou says Doris begged her to—she didn't want to come all that way from Schenktown alone. And I guess Julia's over her time of troubles, with her health and husband and all."

Time of troubles? Mamie had never left Olinger—in fact, she lived two blocks from her mother, who was still alive—and assumed that Allen, who had gone away to college, and then into the Army, and then to New York City, and for thirty years had lived in Connecticut, knew more than he did of local news. He did remember Ann McFarland telling him, back at the fifteenth reunion, that Julia had said she would come only if she could lose ten pounds, but she hadn't managed to, and so had proudly stayed away. She came by bus from Schenktown, six miles from Olinger, and hadn't entered the school system until the ninth grade; she was not a slave to the old Olinger magic the way Mamie and Betty Lou and Ann were.

Allen's mother had always marvelled at the good opinion Olinger people had of themselves. It was not as if it were the richest suburb of Alton, or the prettiest, or the "Dutchiest." In Pennsylvania Dutch country, Dutchiness could be measured, not just by counting the number of decorated barns and whitewashed old inns in a town but by a certain sullen air of resistance to all the things—malls, self-serve gas stations, discount outlets, housing projects for the elderly and less fortunate—that diluted the way things used to look. Buses of tourists came out from Baltimore and Philadelphia to see how things used to look. Olinger had a pre-Revolutionary limestone house at its center, and the memory of a nineteenth-century track for harness races beneath the curving streets of the rather posh section, Oakdale, developed in the thirties and extended up the sides of Shale Hill after the war, but the town was not especially Dutchy, even with the multiplication, it seemed to Allen upon each return, of mass-produced regional kitsch—decal hex signs, dolls in Amish costume.

Someone driving from Lancaster to Alton would pass through Olinger as a segment of a continuous strip of commercial enterprise. In Allen's boyhood, the town had trailed off into cornfields, an old grist mill, a creek full of watercress, a great stone quarry both dangerous and enticing in its emptiness. Now all such mysterious, underpopulated terrain was filled with shopping centers, car lots, aluminum diners, and fast-food franchises. Still, Olinger retained, at least in the minds of his generation, a distinct sense of itself as a sane and blissful medium between the laughable rural innocence of a one-street, one-mill place like Schenktown, tucked into bleak stretches of corn stubble and working orchards, and the urban horrors of Alton, a big depressed industrial town increasingly dominated by its citizens of color. The people of Olinger were proud of being where they were, and Allen still felt his initial departure, set in motion by his mother, as a loss. She had talked his father into moving out of Olinger into an old farmhouse seven miles to the south when Allen was an unlucky thirteen.

Though tending to hang back shyly at these reunions, as he had in high school between fits of awkward brashness, he stood up and looked for Julia. The reunion was being held in a function room of an Alton restaurant, festooned with the class colors, maroon and gold. Blown-up photos from the old days had been hung about. A long buffet table was being set up. The bar was busy and noisy. He found Julia standing not far away, in the center of the room, with a few old admirers and the inseparable Doris Gerhardt. Good-natured, ginger-haired Doris had been perhaps the shortest member of their class, and one of the first to get married. Both women kissed him, which Allen had not expected. Doris's kiss, delivered strenuously upward, was warmer, more pressing, but Julia's certainly occurred, a moist female moment in the center of his lips. The Connecticut courtesy kiss, an antiseptic brushing of the cheeks, didn't exist here. Julia had put on at least ten pounds since high school, but her tallness and elegantly erect posture made light of it. Her hair was white but still abundant and somehow high, springing from her forehead in a soft combed crest, and then falling away toward her wide shoulders. She had a hook nose and gray-green eyes with a curious dark quiet to them: a German beauty, sallow-skinned, carrying herself as if simply being herself was quite enough. In high school she had gone out for no activities, that he could remember. In the yearbook she had listed as her main ambition "to get out of school." In class she was stately and impervious, except when called upon to recite; as she stood, her face flooded with a blush that sent an erotic shiver across the rows. Her smile had an engaging helpless air to it, as if to say, "Well, what can one do?" *Was kennt mann duh*?

Allen, who had been nervous, jittery, trying too hard to get back into the Olinger groove, was struck by how calm he suddenly felt in the presence of Julia and little Doris. He became another self, calmer and taller. "How are you both?"

"Oh, we can't complain too much," Doris said.

"Maybe you can't, but I can," Julia said, brushing back her thick hair with a languid gesture. "I spend half my time at the dentist and the rest at the chiropractor."

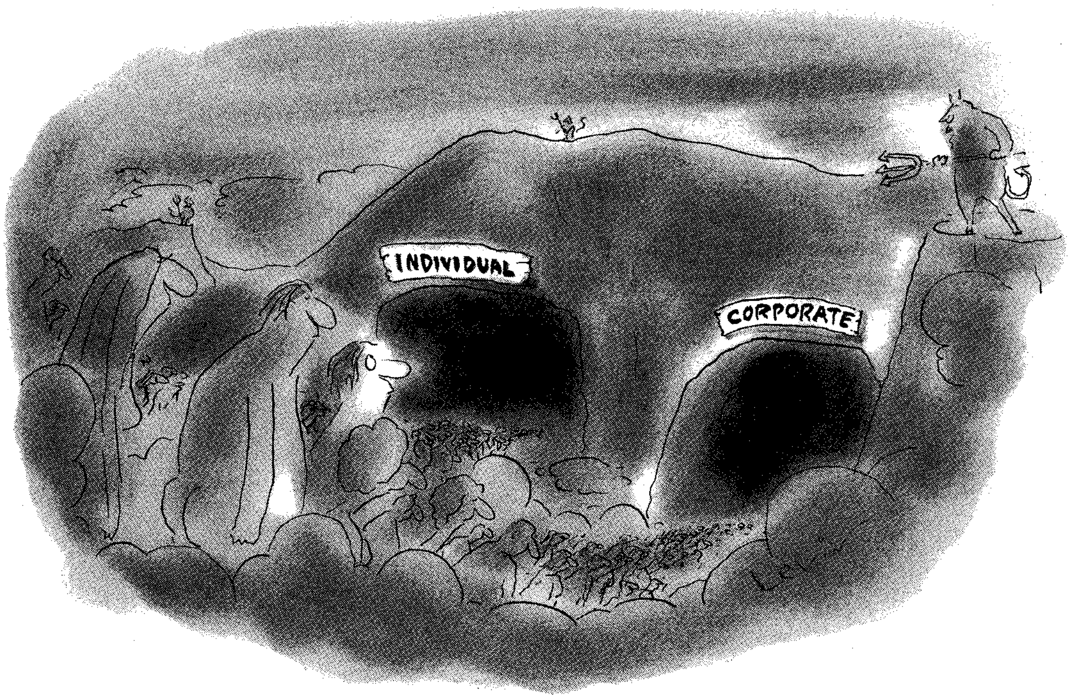
"You look great," Allen said. "You both look great." And then he interrupted their stilted but smiling pleasantries to call his wife out of another conversation—she had been to enough reunions with him to have her own acquaintances in his class. He wanted her to meet Julia. The two women shook hands and looked at each other with a quizzical blandness, and Allen wondered why he had forced this little encounter, and why he felt so uncharacteristically relaxed and *at home*. Then he remembered: lunch hour. To these Schenktown girls he had been another country person, a normal person. They had not minded his being torn from Olinger, a freak son of a freak family; they had seen him as he was, a man-to-be.

HIS family's move had occurred when he was in the eighth grade. The farm wasn't in the Schenktown direction, but to the southeast instead of the southwest of Olinger and Alton. There was no bus, as there was from Schenktown, but the shop teacher at the high school happened to live in the vicinity, and agreed to carry Allen into Olinger—to smuggle him in, almost. The idea of going to a school in the district in which they now lived horrified him, as an abysmal disgrace, a descent into a chasm of strange rural children, smelling brutishly of hay and dung. Somehow, his parents, guilty at the inconvenience wrought in his life, managed the transfer, and until, in the tenth grade, he got his driver's license, he went back and forth as a kind of baggage, killing time on the school grounds or at the luncheonette up the street until the shop teacher was done with his duties and Allen could hitch his ride home. He had gone from being an Olinger boy to being a waif, a homeless bumpkin just clinging to the status of a student. There was no one else like him in the class.

But in truth Olinger had begun to slide from him before the move. Beginning in about the fifth grade, school would be full of chatter and gossip concerning weekend events that had excluded him—gatherings in somebody's garage, or down at the quarry, or in West Alton at the roller-skating rink at the amusement park. There was a gang, and he was not in it. He had lost the trail that he had been following since the walks to kindergarten, and the summers spent at the Olinger playground, and the bicycle trips in a pack all over the town, with the knot of boys and girls he had known all their lives. Of the girls, some were prettier than others, with more spunk and energy, but it hadn't at first mattered as much as it came to matter by seventh or eighth grade. By the time he moved, he almost felt he might as well live in the country, where he could read mystery novels in peace, and practice setshots at a hoop his father had nailed to the barn wall for him, and hoe in the "organic" garden his mother had planted.

In the tenth grade he got his driver's license, and that summer his parents scraped together the three hundred dollars to buy him a 1937 Chevrolet to go back and forth in. He found himself in the same orbit as Julia and Doris. These particular country people had money, it turned out. Their fathers were not farmers. There was an old hat factory in Schenktown, and though felt hats would soon fade from daily use in America, enough prosperity had been generated to afford Julia the use of a green Studebaker convertible and Doris that of a Willys station wagon, with all-steel sides instead of varnished wood, still a novelty in 1948. The cars liberated them not only from the bus but from the high-school cafeteria; while most of the students walked home for lunch in the compact blocks of Olinger, and the others were dished up fried Spam or chicken à la king in the cafeteria line, Julia and Doris and Allen and some Schenktown boys like Wilbur Miller and Morris Hertzog drove up and down the Alton Pike in one or another of their cars, looking for the perfect hamburger. Luncheonette or diner food cost a few dimes more than cafeteria food, but, just as Allen's parents had agreed that the country high school wasn't good enough for him, they provided the five-dollar weekly allowance for his wide-ranging lunches. Looking back, he marvelled at their generosity and his selfishness: a starving teenage predator, hungry for hamburgers, acceptance, and gasoline.

After lunch, there would still be time, in the fifty-five minutes the school allotted, to drive around. In that Pennsylvania of the late forties, before the transformations of the postwar boom had really taken hold, pure countryside lay five minutes from Olinger in every direction except along the trolley tracks toward Alton. Hilly, twisting roads connected lonely farmhouses and an occasional roadside store with two rusty red gas pumps outside. Allen remembered standing up in the rear seat of Julia's Stude-



baker, battered by wind, and then lying back across the folded convertible top onto the sun-warmed metal of the trunk and watching the dazzling alternation of sky and tree branches scud by overhead.

Little cemeteries of tilted sandstones, mysterious thick groves of planted evergreens, rickety farm stands that would have appeared deserted but for their rows of fresh orange pumpkins and the bonneted old woman keeping an eye open from the porch, collapsing stone springhouses, the overgrown ruins of old iron forges, creeks making brown foam with their chuckling small waterfalls, fields of corn, of rye, of tobacco, of cattle, of peach and apple trees in blossom or bent low with fruit—all this poured around the noontime travellers, who were oblivious of most everything but one another and the sensation of speed. When Allen was the automotive host, in the old black Chevrolet, he had a trick, safer than it looked but infallibly producing shouts and screams from his passengers, of putting the car in neutral at the crest of a hill and getting out on the running board and steering through the window. The chance of meeting another car was not great. The roads, laid out in dirt for horse-drawn farm wagons, had been paved before the war. Soon enough they would be broadened, and the curves straightened at the cost of a little dormered farmhouse or stone-sided dirt-ramp barn, but for now they formed an empty maze that called these licensed adolescents out, out from the high school with its crammed halls and classrooms, its perfumed and slick-haired mobs in angora sweaters and corduroy shirts and saddle shoes and penny loafers, its whispering seethe of romance and breakup and calculated misbehavior and its merciless gradations of worth, by Olinger standards—the shining ins and the shadowy outs, the attractive and admirable versus the many more who were neither of these things.

Reunions revealed that keenly felt structure of implacable discriminations to have been a poor predictor of adult performance. It was the comically tongue-tied bumpkin, invisible in class, who moved to Maryland and founded an empire of plant nurseries and parked a silver Jaguar in the lot of the reunion restaurant. It was the forlorn, scorned daughter of a divorced mother—a monstrous thing in those days—who had become a glamorous merchandising executive in Chicago. The class cutups had become schoolteachers and policemen, heavy with civic responsibility. The prize for newest father—his bouncy fourth wife, in a low-cut satin minidress, indistinguishable from his third, five years ago—went to a boy who had never, as far as anyone could recall, attended a dance or gone out on a date. The class wallflowers, an almost invisible backdrop of colorless femininity against which the star females had done their cheers and sported their athletic boyfriends, had acquired graceful manners and a pert suburban poise, while the queens of the class had succumbed to a lopsided overdevelopment of the qualities—bustiness, peppiness, recklessness, a cunning chiselled hardness—that had made them spectacular.

Julia had been spectacular but seemed unaware of it or, if aware, dismissive of it. Her characteristic expression, that worried smile which asked, "What can you do?" alternated, in Allen's observation, with a faintly grim, masculine intentness, as when she was driving her convertible fast, with her chestnut hair flattened back from her forehead and rippling furiously, or when she was smoking a cigarette at lunch. Her lower jaw would move out under the cigarette and her eyes would narrow like a man's. The way she always travelled with an attendant, little Doris, enhanced the powerfully exotic impression she made on the class élite. The good-looking, dynamic girls courted her, and enrolled her in their circle almost against her will. She shrugged off as ridiculous the boys who professed, along the wriggling grapevines of gossip, their love for her. She had no sex life, that Allen could see; perhaps it was back in Schenktown. The boys, Wilbur and Morris, who came along on their lunchtime drives had a countrified softness and discretion of manner, as if life were innocent of undercurrents, as if these devil-may-care lunchtime excursions were not an exhilarating exercise in bonding, in nerve, in defiance of the order imposed in Olinger High and the surrounding tight community of semidetached brick houses. There was something negative, something refusing about Julia that Allen liked, without being tempted to cross the pleasant sexlessness between them. If she had ever kissed him before this forty-fifth reunion, he had forgotten it.

Their rural mobility brought its social rewards. More than once, as juniors aged into seniors, Julia's Studebaker or Doris's station wagon showed up on a weekend at Allen's farm, that farm with which his mother had expected to place an irrevocable remove between her family and Olinger. They would carry him away, in a nest of passengers that included not just the Schenktown pals but such prizes as Mamie and Betty Lou and Ann, and the boys they deemed acceptable. By way of Julia's magnetism and the power of the automobile, he had made his way back in, into those mysterious, pointless, indispensable get-togethers that had begun to exclude him in the fifth grade. The group went bowling, played canasta in clouds of cigarette smoke, watched infant television, drove to a pond where there was a dock and diving board—flimsy excuses, all of them, for being together and staying together, on the edge of those possibilities they felt, dimly, approaching to shape and limit their lives. It was a little late for him; he was plotting his own escape from Olinger, following his mother's lead after all. But he was happy to be in a gang again, and took with him into the world the added confidence of being accepted.

Until tonight he had not distinctly seen how much that acceptance had been something Julia had passed on to him, not valuing it greatly herself. Of her life once she made her escape from school he knew little and needed to know nothing—a Schenktown husband, a row of children, a dose of the illnesses and disappointments that give life its final flavor of death. She had tasted it all even then. Well, what can a body do? All we have in the end is pride. The erect way she carried herself in those vanished, clattering halls had made her breasts, in an old-fashioned edgy bra and fuzzy sweater, jut out sharply, above a stomach as tautly flat as if she had taken a deep breath to sing.

So that was why he had felt relaxed and tall and grateful, accepted for what he was, seeing Julia Reidenhauser again. But why had he felt that sharp impulse to introduce her to his wife? He watched his wife move about in the motel room in Alton, slowly undressing, fussing at the provincial inadequacies of the accommodations—instant coffee in the bathroom but no shower cap or bath oil—yet sweetly calm and somewhat absent beneath this skin of irritation. A woman was a circle whose center was slightly elsewhere. Allen wondered if he would live to see the fiftieth reunion. Mamie had spoken into the microphone about it, her lisping voice curling around a vision of something extraordinary—a cruise on the Chesapeake, a weekend in Bermuda even, which aren't as expensive as you would think, off season. She wanted them all to write her with their ideas. "And please include your present correct address, for the class list. Things don't get forwarded anymore; the parents that used to do it are gone." Help, she was saying, we are sinking into the sea of the generations. There was no more Olinger High School; the name had been swallowed up by a regionalization in the fifties, and the high-school building itself, with its waxed oak hallways and wealth of hidden asbestos, had been reduced to rubble in the seventies. At their twenty-fifth reunion, the door prizes had been yellow bricks salvaged from the rubble.

"Maybe this will be the last one I'll drag you to," Allen told his wife.

She gave him a harassed, dishevelled, lovable look. "Miss your fiftieth? Why? I don't mind them. They're nice people, really. They just have never gone anywhere."

"I think they think they're already there. How did you like Julia?" Julia had left, with Doris, before the dancing began, and the post-dinner drinking. First, Butch Fogel had shown an old movie his father had taken on 8-mm. film, of a Memorial Day parade in 1937, and then of a clambake on the vacant lot next to the Lutheran church: Allen had been ecstatically rapt, spotting as they flickered by an old Sunday-school teacher brandishing a cigar, and the bald doctor who used to come visit with a little unfolding black bag, and (for a piercing split second) his youthful father, mugging for the camera, and then the fat town policeman who at Christmas always dressed up as Santa Claus. Allen looked for himself in the swiftly panned throngs, but he would have been only five, and would he have recognized himself anyway?

"Which was she?"

"The tallish one with the hook nose and the crown of white hair."

"She seemed a bit above it all."

"That was her approach. But she wasn't, really." It came to him why he had wanted them to meet, to touch each other: he was proud of knowing both of them, both these women. Until Julia, he had only known growing girls. ♦

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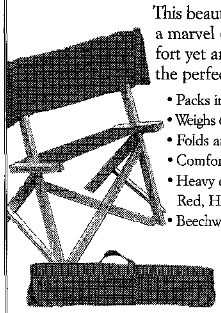

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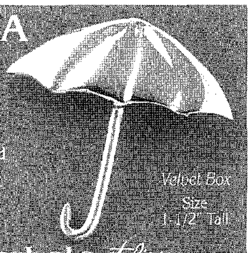

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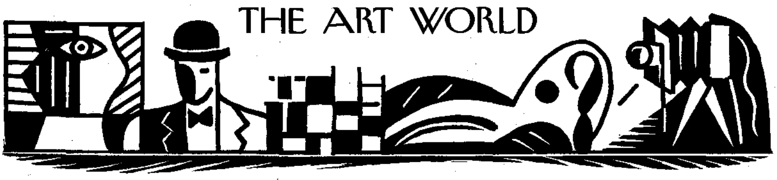


MODES OF SEDUCTION

The theatrical eloquence of haute couture at the Costume Institute.

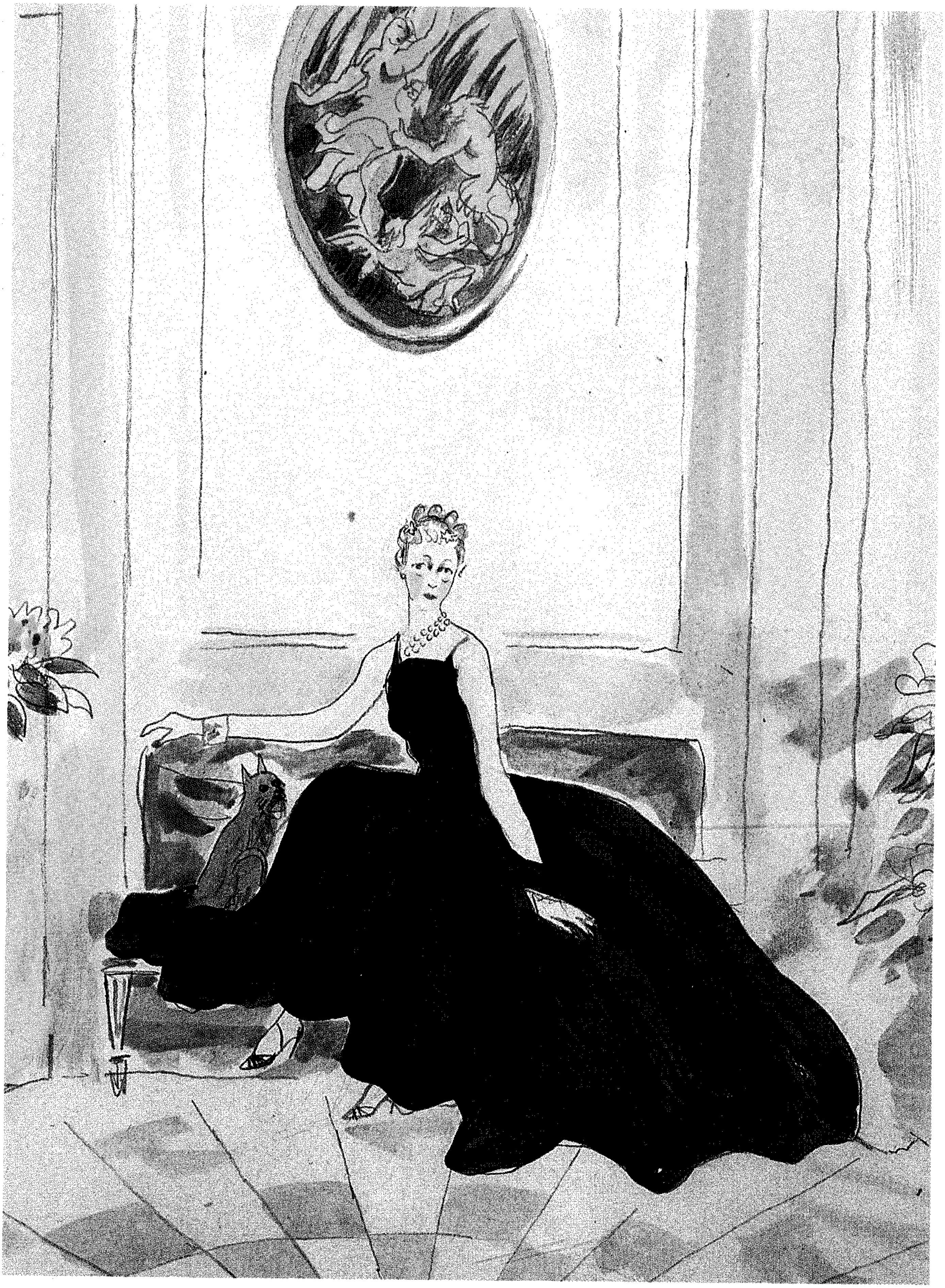
BY SIMON SCHAMA

AMID the tiered ranks of tulle and lace and taffeta and feathers crowding the Metropolitan Museum Costume Institute's smart little "Haute Couture" show, Yves Saint Laurent's so-called Mondrian dress, in primary-color panels of wool jersey, shouts for attention. "Look at me," it says. "I'm Art." A quick reality check down at MOMA will confirm that it isn't, but instead the dress is artful, in concealing a minimal three-dimensional structure within the black grid. And this calculated craftiness, which allows for a third dimension, unavailable to painting—body movement—is what makes the homage to Mondrian's flat abstractions superfluous. Fashion, as this show unquestionably demonstrates, is indeed a legitimate art form, with its own distinctive language of representation and its own spectacular history. While it has had important connections with the visual arts, not least its dependence on illustrated reproductions to make it commercially desirable—this is the subject of a parallel exhibition of couture illustrations and photographs at the uptown Gagosian gallery—fashion doesn't need to slipstream behind high art to claim its space in the museum. Above all, it doesn't need to apologize for its creative embrace of the pleasure principle.

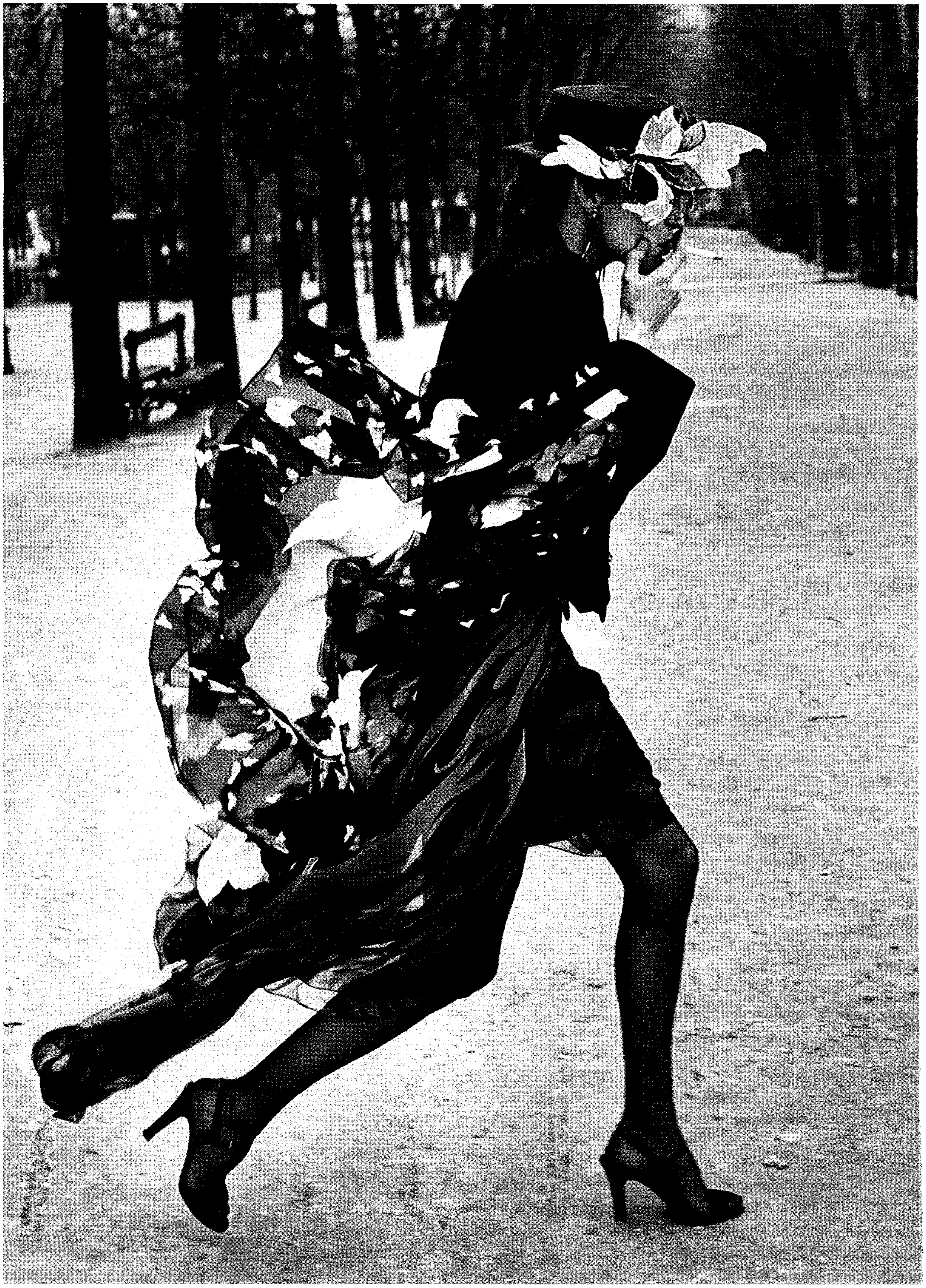
So Richard Martin and Harold Koda, who between them have made the Costume Institute one of the most interesting places in the city's art world, didn't really have to invoke a list of heroic modernists—from Manet and Degas to Seurat and the Cubists—to clear themselves of suspicion that an exhibition like this one is a gala-driven exercise to gratify well-heeled donors. Still, the spirited note of defensiveness struck in the catalogue ("Today, the haute couture is neither haughty nor superannuated") is understandable. The preceding haute-couture show at the Costume Institute, in 1983, was a classic Diana Vreeland extravaganza that eulogized Yves Saint Laurent as a tormented genius. Three years later, Debora Silverman's book "Selling Culture" attacked the Vreeland epoch at the Costume Institute as a thinly disguised public-relations campaign for department-store retailing. "The Man and the Horse," for example, in 1984, billed by the museum as a celebration of "the splendor of equestrian attire" and "man's desire to emulate the nobility of the horse," was not unhelpful to the Polo line of the major sponsor of the exhibition, Ralph Lauren. Silverman argued that Vreeland had annexed "museum culture for marketing" and had turned the Costume Institute's program into a playground for Reagan-era adulation of wealth and glamour.

Fair or unfair, Silverman's critique echoed puritanical attacks on fashionable excesses which have been voiced since the reign of the gaudy third-century tyrant Diocletian. The timing of the present "Haute Couture" show, which opens just as Congress is arguing over whose backs are to bear the burden of deficit reduction, may have made its curators a little edgy about, say, those patches of white mink clinging to the bust of an opulently embroidered Jacques Fath ball gown of 1951. In any case, the curators have been careful to eschew the kind of ritzy-glitzy touches that were Mrs. Vreeland's trademark. No bright-red walls, no orchidaceous settings—just a freely painted evocation of a fifties fashion show at the entrance, and displays conceived with exceptional intelligence and integrity. The pure showiness of exhibits devoted to the pieces that define changing style, from Charles Frederick Worth's crinolines of the eighteen-nineties to Christian Dior's post-Second World War New Look, is complemented by coats and dresses exemplifying the artisanal techniques involved in the creation of the most ambitious products of couture. The show includes displays that deal with embroidery, appliqué work, and lace, and the *flou*, or the relationship of cut and fabric to body movement. Cumulatively, these elements go a long way toward vindicating the curators' argument that haute couture must be seen as the product not merely of designing geniuses but of the entire community of specialized work that constitutes the métier.

Serious as the exhibition is about work, it is also a tour de force of playfulness. And, much as Martin and Koda want to show couture as a collective enterprise, they don't mind (nor should they) advertising the claims of its most inspired creators to be serious artists in their own right. Charles Frederick Worth, the English drygoods salesman generally credited with inventing haute couture, in Second Empire Paris, sometimes got himself up in a Rembrandt costume, complete with beret, fur-lined cape, and floppy tie, to designate his place among the immortals. But his creative genius—which was real, to judge by the astonishing pink, ivory, and ice-blue silk ball gowns at the Met—was based at least as much on commercial and cultural acumen as on design. Worth came from a Victorian society in which landed wealth (and its horsy aversion to metropolitan glamour) still dictated the norms of social display, and nubile young women were trotted around the paddocks of the country balls like good breeding fillies. In the London millinery establishment, salesmen were required to grovel before their lordly customers like country-house servants. Gilded, plutocratic Paris was altogether different. Like Karl Marx, Worth grasped the fact that Louis Napoleon's gangsterish empire was based on the ruthless manipulation of raw wealth, and he didn't need Thorstein Veblen to tell him that conspicuous consumption was the cloak necessary for disguising this political vulgarity. After 1858, when he opened his own shop, Worth made himself useful both to plutocrats hoping to find a market for their daughters among the aristocracy and to aristocrats mortgaging the château to dress their daughters as millionaire bait. A major part of his clientele, however, consisted of the *grandes horizontales*—the courtesans who were at the center of the gossipy, libidinous demimonde. This was the world that Hugo, Flaubert, and Zola detested and the world in which



Elsie de Wolfe in a Mainbocher dress. Illustration by Cecil Beaton for Vogue, 1935.



PHOTOGRAPH: © HELMUT NEWTON

Worth flourished as the man who could make female display function as investment capital.

Worth also understood that what should have been interpreted as a scandalous exhibition of owned women actually worked to reinforce status in the gaze-besotted world of metropolitan Paris. Baron Haussmann's architectural reordering of the city provided exactly the theatres of spectacle—the Opéra, Longchamp, the *grands boulevards*—in which the parade of expensively dressed women could serve as an advertisement of moneyed power. And the specific forms of dress that Worth specialized in catered precisely to this display of women as enviable—indeed, negotiable—sexual property. The Worth ball gowns on show at the Met divided women's bodies into opposing zones of display and concealment, each with its own potent allure. (Anne Hollander makes just this point in her recent, brilliantly observant book "Sex and Suits.") Above the corset-pinched waist and rib cage, a semi-exposed bosom and a naked show of back and arms emerged like the petals of a pale hothouse bloom. And although the lower dress conformed to the full, robelike covering that had been largely unchanged since the Middle Ages, Worth found ways to invest the skirt with theatrical eloquence. Using trains and bustles, he could create a river of decorative material flowing from the waist; or he could use figured damask and satin to sing the joys of the erotic welcome concealed within the silken tent. One especially beautiful creation that the Met's show features is a sunburst exploding asymmetrically on its wearer's thighs and an arrow-dart stomacher pointing unambiguously south.

WORTH was not the first dress designer to trade on his reputation of being a virtuoso of an arcane craft, or to establish a relationship with his clients which was more like the reciprocity of artist and patron than like the fawning dependence of tailor on aristocrat. Marie-Antoinette's dressmaker, Rose Bertin, who had created the loose muslin *à la Gaulle* outfits for the Queen, had been

Meeting the demand for the irrational and the extravagant: Loulou de La Falaise wearing a couture ensemble by Yves Saint Laurent in the Luxembourg Gardens, Paris, 1978. Photograph by Helmut Newton.

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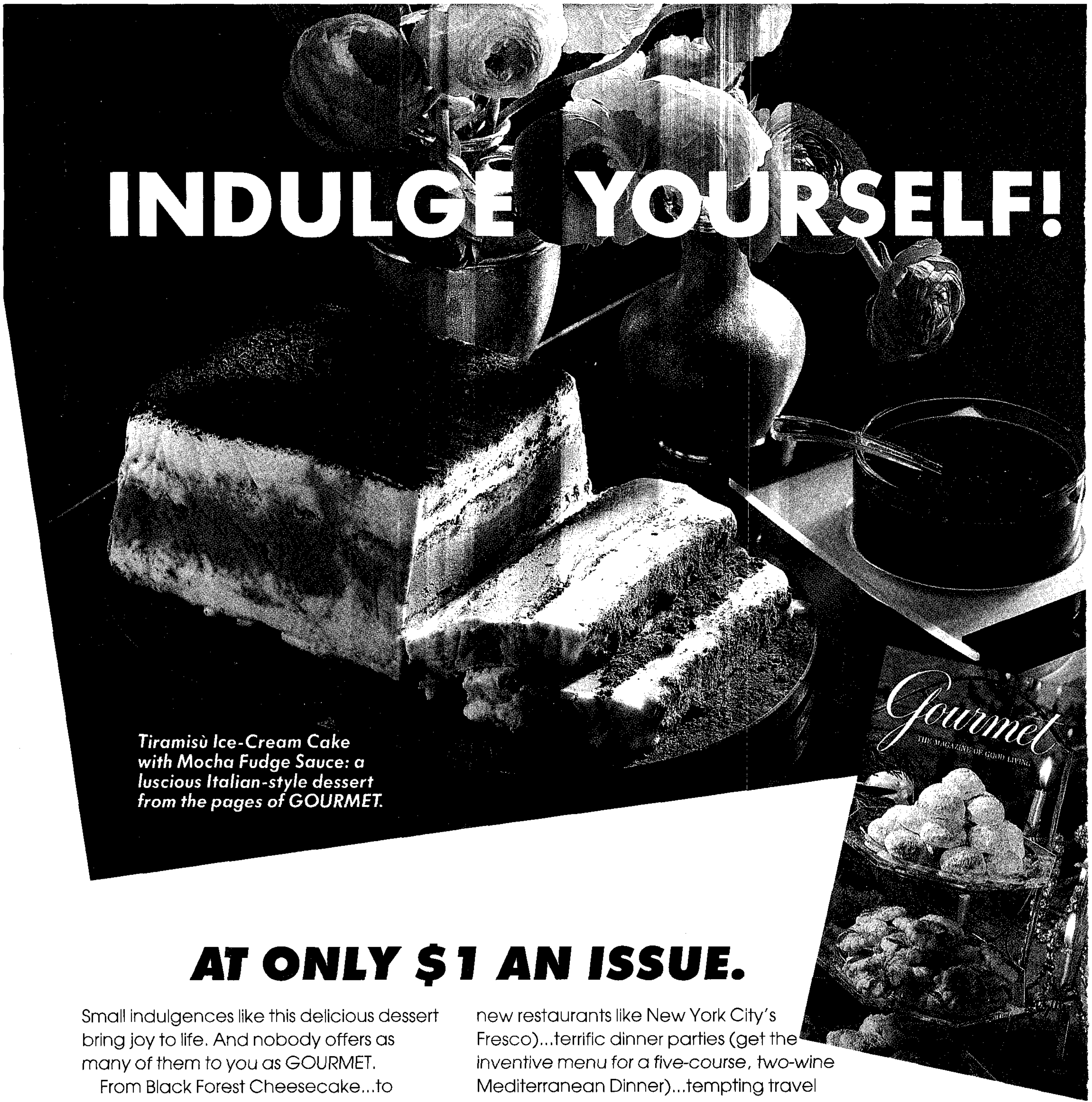

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criticized by both the friends and the enemies of the monarchy for her presumption in talking to her sovereign like an equal. When the artist Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun painted portraits both of herself and of the Queen wearing the Bertin dresses, and exhibited them for public admiration in the biennial Salon, the golden triangle of couturier, patron, and illustrator was formed. But, for all its notoriety, this was a women's circle. Eighty years later, Worth, by intruding on what had been the intimate preserve of seamstress and patroness, and by winding his tape measure around his customers' bodies, caused a scandal. But he knew that by turning the fitting room into a place of male power he could claim to be working as much for masters as for mistresses, and it was the *seigneurs* who settled his outrageous bills.

To be sure, there were women designers who were a match for the House of Worth, both in creativity and in profitability—in particular, Jeanne Paquin. But it was Paul Poiret, another male, and at least as shameless a self-promoter as Worth, who advertised himself as the liberator of couture from the tyranny of the corset. Though his claims were immodest, Poiret does deserve the credit for designing, in the decade before the First World War, unstructured cylindrical dresses in which women's bodies resumed something like their natural shape. Instead of being imposing vessels of fabric sailing over the dance floor, women who dressed in the looser, kimono-like Poiret dresses seemed more plausibly equal partners of men. Much taken with the sensuous forms of Oriental dress, Poiret used panels of brilliant solid-color silks, often stitched to black grounds, to create the breathtakingly beautiful effect evident in the current exhibition's showstopper—the "Sorbet" dress, of 1913. Before his career collapsed, in the twenties, Poiret had pioneered another decisive innovation: the American tour. Declaring himself delighted with the independence he discovered in American women, he played to their craving for a couture messiah. Accounts of ecstatic fashion shows describe him gazing, Svengali-like, into the eyes of female devotees and whispering the color—jade or ivory or rose—that best matched the essence of their personalities.

Though Poiret had important female competitors, such as the Callot sisters, it was only in the inter-war period, when Gabrielle Chanel and Elsa Schiaparelli dominated couture, that Rose Bertin's promise of haute couture by women was finally fulfilled. Like Bertin, Chanel made the supple articulation of the entire female body (and not the male fetishes of breasts and buttocks) the essential condition of finesse. And Chanel took the revolutionary step of raising hemlines all the way to the knee, exposing women's legs for literally the first time in the entire history of women's fashion. In an age when hemlines might reach for the crotch or drop to the sidewalk, it is easy to take this for granted. But Chanel's Little Black Dress, with its inspired use of the theretofore commonplace material of jersey, and with its crêpe-de-chine hem holding a perfect waterfall of pleats in rhythmic order, ought to be seen for the act of great daring it was. At last, clothing was designed to flatter a woman's independent pleasure in her own body. With fabric functioning like a second skin, Chanel was confident that this act of self-possession, far from diminishing male desire, might actually enhance it.

PARADOXICALLY, this long-term triumph of the natural line subverted the defining exclusiveness of haute couture more seriously than the women designers of the twenties and thirties could ever have intended. For although some of the most apparently simple designs of Jeanne Lanvin's tubelike gown and the liquidly Hellenic creations of Alix Grès and Madeleine Vionnet concealed sophisticated structural supports, they were easy to approximate in machine-made versions for the ready-to-wear trade.

It was the consciousness of the Pyrrhic nature of Chanel's victories that emboldened Christian Dior to present old male fantasies of pneumatic bliss as the supermodern New Look of 1947. Rigidly structured underwear was back, along with lethally cantilevered brassières and martial girdles, creating the arabesque silhouettes of the fifties, with petticoat-puffed skirts flouncing and bouncing their way to dreams of domestic bliss. Norms of male and female dress had not been so far apart since the days of Worth.

When the pendulum swung back once more, producing the sharply linear forms of the sixties, the initiative came not from within couture but from the street culture and off-the-rack fearlessness of London designers like Mary Quant. In France, Yves Saint Laurent, Paco Rabanne, and Courrèges were left merely to embellish and outrage, to exploit the expectations built into couture—its demand for the irrational and the extravagant. Instead of Worth's yard after yard of embroidered taffeta, they offered aggressively synthetic totems of modernity, like Cardin's peekaboo cutout breast holes and his spaceman's helmet. The ultimate folly of couture's painful mismatch of popular and high culture is Versace's elaborate polyvinyl evening dress embroidered with denim stitching and jeans-style pockets—a jokey mixture of the transparent and the opaque perfectly suited to its client Madonna.

The survival of haute couture now turns more on perfume-marketing strategies and on the performance of ready-to-wear affiliates like Saint Laurent's Rive Gauche than on its classic role as producer of exclusive designs for individual customers. If couture still displays the vitality that is claimed for it in this show, it does so largely as a personal-service branch of the dream-and-fantasy empire we call contemporary Western culture. Its most conspicuous products are explorations of the improbable, like Oscar de la Renta's astounding apparition of layered pink feathers, designed to turn its wearer into a flamingo in mating season. Such confections are a reversion to the traditions of the princely masques of the Renaissance and Baroque courts, intended not just for a single client but for a single event, since shaved ostrich feathers are unlikely to stay unruffled after repeated use.

In fact, the conspicuousness of fowl, fur, and even fish (as in Yves Saint Laurent's "sardine" dress of 1983) gives the last section of this show a faintly taxidermic atmosphere, as if someone had strayed across the park from the American Museum of Natural History to create dioramas in which prime specimens of Couture Culture stalk their female prey across a landscape of gala events. Perhaps the Costume Institute should go all the way, and use animatronics—robot mannequins and the like—to liven things up a bit. When I made this helpful suggestion to the curators of the show, they demurred. "Ah, yes," one of them replied politely. "Of course, the conservators would commit suicide." Fatal Collection—there's a really interesting idea for a show. ♦

BOOKS

CLASS ACT

Anthony Powell, chronicler of an era, at ninety.

BY JEREMY TREGLOWN

ANTHONY POWELL gave the English language a word it needed: Widmerpool—for anyone indefensibly egotistical, farcically ambitious, and unforgivably successful. The name became a byword even among people who had never read Powell's books. A fan tells a story of meeting the novelist on a train and describing his plan for a party to which "everyone would bring his Widmerpool candidate as his guest." Powell got out at the next station, muttering "Widmerpool, Widmerpool, I know now how Frankenstein must have felt."

Kenneth Widmerpool is one of the main characters in "A Dance to the Music of Time," Powell's comi-tragic diagnosis of English upper-middle-class life from the First World War through the sixties. The twelve-novel sequence, which was completed twenty years ago and has been reissued by the University of Chicago Press in four handsome paperback volumes, follows the ebb and flow (more ebb than flow) of the mid-century bohemocracy as seen through the eyes of one of its members, the self-effacing but sharply observant Nicholas Jenkins. Jenkins's career takes him from Eton and Oxford via the London literary and movie worlds to military service in the Second World War, after which he retreats into a more secluded life of writing and reading. Meanwhile, his despised old school friend Widmerpool rises irresistibly in politics. Between these tides bob artists, activists, drones, and wreckers—people whom we get to know not only as acquaintances but as elements in a loose kind of psychological taxonomy that Philip Larkin compared to Ben Jonson's "humours."

If this sounds like fictional gossip, so it very enjoyably but only partly is. The biographer Hilary Spurling produced a guidebook to the "Dance" sequence which includes full curricula vitae of more than three hundred characters. They have stood up well—the alcoholic charmer Charles Stringham, for example, or his niece Pamela Flitton, sick in the church font as a child bridesmaid, and a havoc-wreaker in most of the marriages she encounters ever after. Widmerpool himself becomes Pamela's husband, and suffers at her hands some of the many humiliations to which "Dance" subjects him.

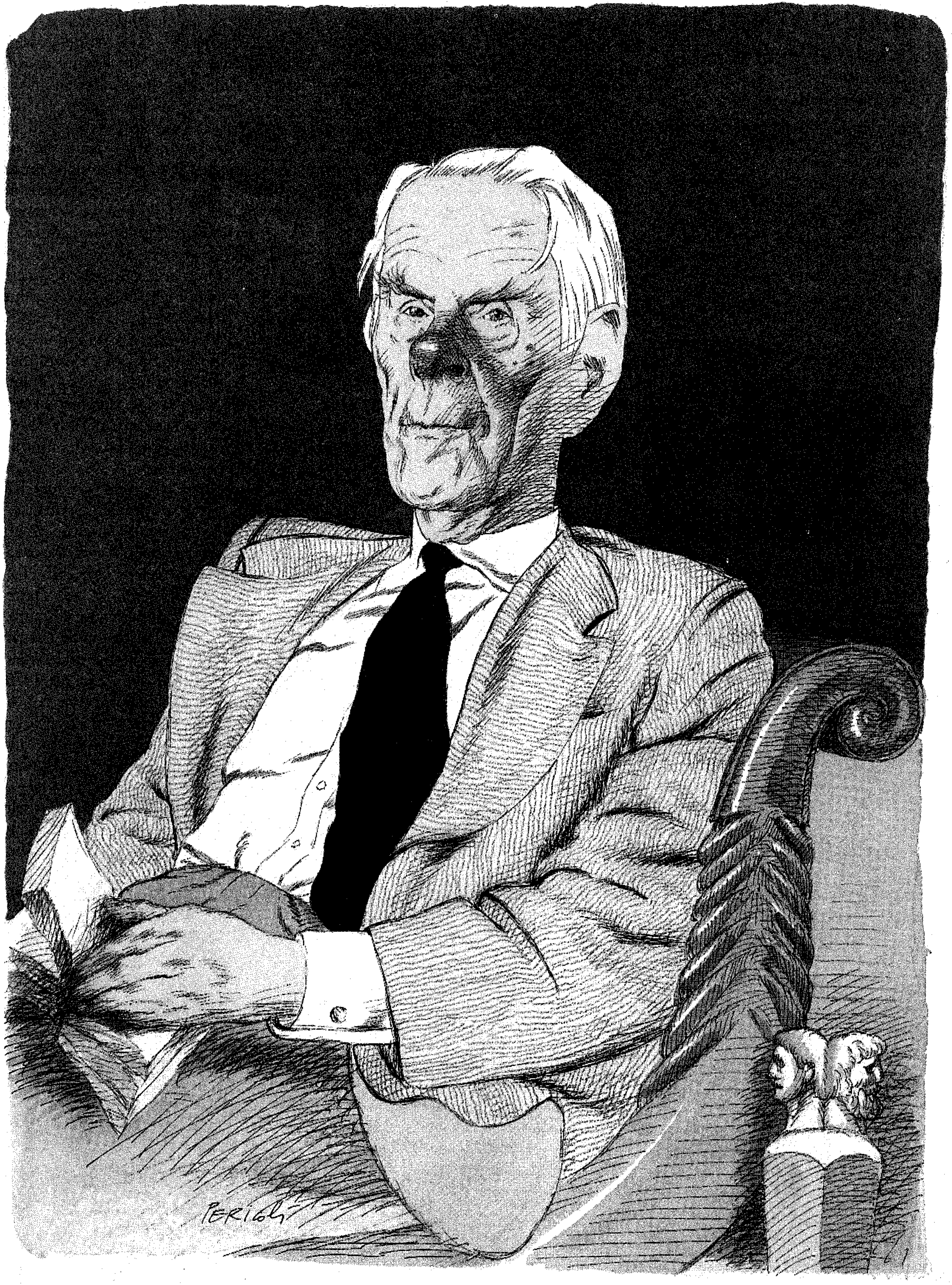
So the novels are at one level a high-class, upper-class comic soap. They are also a satirical elegy for an era marked by the Second World War, about which Powell's historical sense is at its clearest and his social sympathies are broadest. But what's less often said is that "Dance" is a quietly audacious experiment. It is a neo-neoclassical novel—an intricate network of allusions to a part-mythological past that is shown, not always comfortingly, as endlessly recurrent. To the most admiring members of its original audience, "Dance" seemed like Proust reconceived by P. G. Wodehouse, or like the work of a modern Thackeray. Critics as diverse as Clive James, Alison Lurie, and V. S. Pritchett acclaimed it as one of the subtlest and funniest achievements in postwar British fiction. Philip Larkin had reservations but praised the way "Dance" contrived "pleasures of accumulation . . . effects that depend on the reader's observation and intelligence," and also "sudden uproarious jokes"—such as a cocktail called Death Comes for the Archbishop.

Larkin's doubts were about depth: he thought the characters didn't suffer enough (although "Dance" has its quota of suicides, dead babies, broken relationships, and unfulfilled talents). Another kind of objection—one that is heard more often—is about snobbery. In a 1975 review of the final volume, Auberon Waugh, son of Powell's contemporary and onetime close friend Evelyn, described Powell as "an odious poseur, a ponderous and conceited public school show-off whose ludicrous one-man act can appeal only to the socially and intellectually insecure." The novels, far from being "some sort of Bayeux Tapestry of our times," reminded Waugh of "one of those marvellously ingenious things done with pins and a cotton-reel which used to be called French Knitting. . . . Those who had enough wool and enough patience could make miles and miles of delicately variegated colours in a long worm which could later be trained into table mats, egg baskets and even tea cosies."

"Public school show-off" seems a strange gibe coming from this Tory-anarchist quarter. Private quarrels may have heightened the animosity: in Powell's long career as a reviewer, he had tough things to say about the Waughs. But similar abrasions have been inflicted on his most recent book—"Journals, 1982-1986," an undeniably feeble account of visits to doctor and dentist, its cantankerousness only occasionally lifted by a gift of claret, a literary prize, or an unexpected genealogical link. At Powell's age—he turns ninety this month—there is perhaps no reason for his diaries to contain anything more. No reason, either, though, for anyone to want to read them. And among the main objections raised against the "Journals" is the one levelled by Waugh against the rest of his work: that it is obsessed with class.

So, of course, was the world that Powell describes. And part of the point of "A Dance to the Music of Time" lies in its defense of hierarchies. Among the classy things valued in the book are high art and literature. The title itself is taken from Poussin's painting of that name in the Wallace Collection, the most unchanging of London's major galleries. Powell describes the allegory in his opening pages: "Human beings, facing outward like the Seasons, moving hand in hand in intricate measure: stepping slowly, methodically, sometimes a trifle awkwardly . . . unable to control the melody, unable, perhaps, to control the steps of the dance."

There is also another reference—to Proust's "À la Recherche du Temps Perdu." Near the end of Powell's ninth volume, "The Military Philosophers," which is set in the closing phase of the Second World War, the narrator has the job of guiding a group of senior military representatives of the Allies on a tour of the newly liberated France. It's an emotional time for the normally buttoned-up Jenkins—the most overtly so in the se-



Like Proust reconceived by P. G. Wodehouse: Powell's twelve-volume "Dance to the Music of Time" appears in a new paperback edition.

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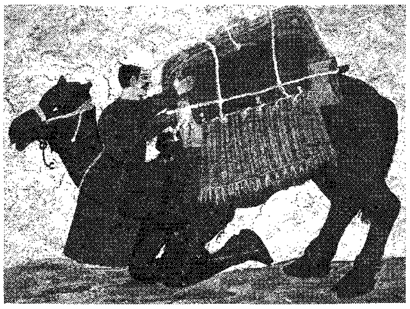

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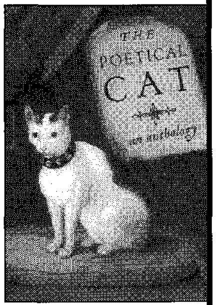

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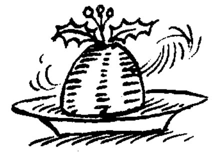
quence. At one point, he is briefly in tears. But his strongest feeling is purely aesthetic—his recollection, as he drives away from the small coastal resort of Cabourg, that the town was Proust's Balbec. To Jenkins, Balbec is no less real than Cabourg—in many ways, it is more so. This is itself a distinctly Proustian moment, of course, but we're reminded almost immediately that in "Dance" its intensity derives from the fact that Jenkins, quite unlike Proust's narrator, is a deliberately underrealized figure, especially to himself. A few pages later, he encounters the Welsh regiment in which he served during the war's early months. His old company is now commanded by Kedward, an uxorious small-town bank clerk whom he befriended, and whom we feel we have come to know well. Despite every prompting, Kedward can scarcely remember Jenkins at all.



Breaches of the narrator's privacy are rare in "Dance." Why, he seems to ask, should we want any account of "specifically personal sensations, experienced in the past, of pleasure and of pain," or of his marriage and "that amorphous yet intense substance of which family life is made up"? Better just to allude to such matters and let us fill in the details for ourselves, as Jenkins does with the song lyrics he enjoys, where the feeling is generated in spaces left for the listener's own experience: "I took one look at you— / That's all I meant to do— / And then my heart— stood still." With other characters, including the most broadly comic ones, Jenkins often encourages his reader to do the interpretative work, giving us little more to go on than hints—about the industrialist Sir Magnus Donners, for example, who when he shows guests the dungeons of his medieval castle always says (delighting his louche employee Stringham), "I sometimes think that is where we should put the girls who don't behave."

So the novels' "pleasures of accumulation" are also pleasures of reflection and imagination. Their readers grow used to moving around at their own pace, as if they were in a portrait gallery, noticing where a similar motif occurred before, or stopping to look something up in the guidebook. As one of the characters argues, good writers "don't suddenly steal an indispensable secret that gives complete mastery of the situation, but accumulate a lot of relatively humdrum facts, which when collated provide the picture." But, while Powell has never disguised the amount of toil that has gone into his fiction, he makes few claims for it. To him (and like him), Jenkins is simply the kind of person, rarer now than when the sequence began, who was brought up to think it rude to talk about himself and whose judgments have been formed by the shrewd, minute observation of externals. Besides uniquely communicating a crucial aspect of a certain kind of Englishness, this reverses the cardinal modern Western assumption (including that of Proust) that the inner life is all-important.

Powell regards self-examination as a gross form of post-Freudian, late-Romantic narcissism. His own unforthcomingness is famous, and wasn't breached by four volumes of straight memoirs that he published after completing "Dance." By now one of very few survivors of his Eton-and-Oxford circle, he was the slowest to write his memoirs. His friends Harold Acton, Cyril Connolly, and Henry Green had each brought out an autobiography by the forties, and Evelyn Waugh had done so by the mid-sixties. Powell's didn't begin to appear until 1976, and is much the least self-revealing of the group. One of the characters in his first novel, "Afternoon Men," asks, "Do you mind if I speak plainly?" The answer—"Yes . . . I do. I should hate it"—is very much the voice of Powell himself. Interviews with him end up looking blank. Almost seventy years as a writer have brought him visits from a lot of journalists, but he likens his technique with them to a soldier's keeping a spare set of kit pressed and polished, always ready for inspection. A piece of this kit is to claim self-ignorance. "Most people have a very clear idea of what sort of person they are, and I never have had," he says. "To this moment I don't really know—for good or ill—what I'm like."

It's clear, though, that he is very like his narrator. Jenkins's father is a professional soldier, as Powell's was. Jenkins's first novel is published in 1931, as was Powell's. Jenkins's friends, like Powell's, are partly upper-class people he was at school with, and partly a more mobile, bohemian crowd of artists, journalists, and political activists. (The young Powell's own friends included George Orwell.) After some love affairs, Jenkins marries Lady

Isobel Tolland in 1934, the year in which Powell married Lady Violet Pakenham, who was a member of the large family of the Earl of Longford and was herself a future biographer and critic. The Jenkinses, like the Powells, have two sons, one born at the beginning and one at the end of the Second World War. During the war, Jenkins soon joins the Intelligence Corps and becomes—as Powell did—a liaison officer. Later, Jenkins writes a book about Robert Burton, the seventeenth-century author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy"; Powell's subject was the biographer and naturalist John Aubrey. For a time, Jenkins works as a literary editor—Powell had jobs at the *Times Literary Supplement* and *Punch*—and then resumes novel writing. As Jenkins's books become successful, he retires to the country, and so did Powell.

I RECENTLY visited Powell at his country home, in Somerset—a Regency mini-mansion called The Chantry, where he and Lady Violet have lived since the early fifties, and where most of "Dance" was written. I asked him whether he had been especially interested in the narrators of other people's novels. His answer turned into an alarmingly complicated cough, followed by "When anybody asks me that sort of question, I can never remember having read a book in my life." Yet he is a deeply literary writer, whose work anticipated some of the philosophical tricks with which Borges and Calvino later bowled over their readers. In Powell's 1939 novel, "What's Become of Waring," for example, a publisher commissions a life of one of the most successful authors on his list, who has been reported dead; the biographer finds out that every book by his subject, whom he has idolized, was a plagiarism. The name Borges elicited nothing more from Powell than a sidelong look of discreet aghastness—whether because he hadn't read him or because he didn't rate him highly isn't clear. He responded enthusiastically, though, to the idea that often what gets acclaimed as new has been done by writers for centuries—that the self-reflexive novel is as old as the Arabian Nights. He has a habit of putting whole sentences in italics, and he did so now: *"Absolutely! You couldn't conceivably have said a truer word."*

The vanishing plagiarist is a typical Powell invention. His novels relish all forms of charlatanism, any fantasy of

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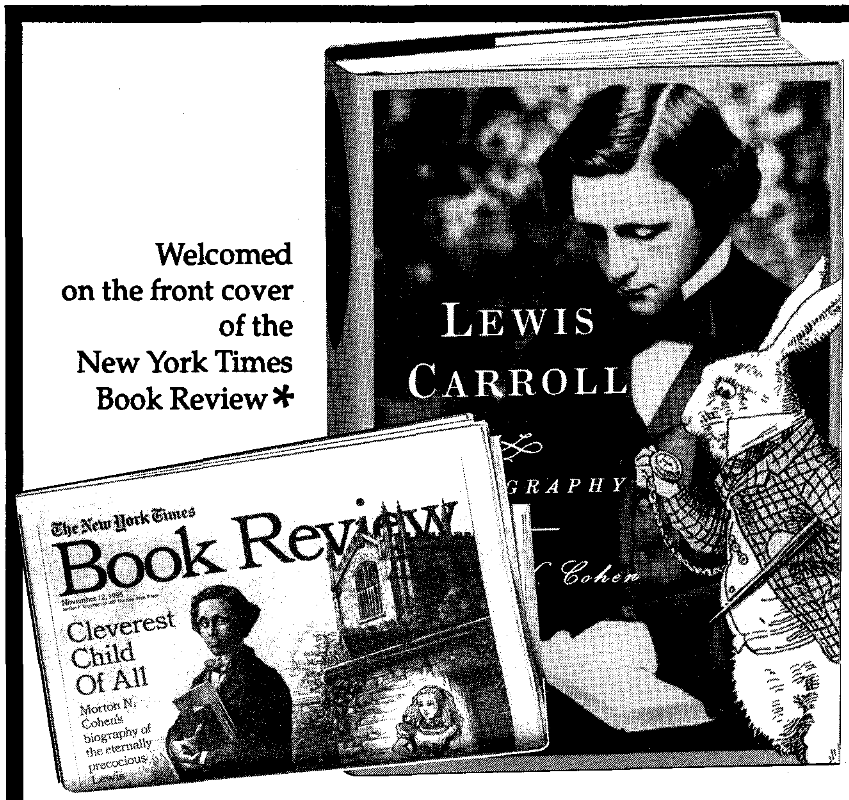

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self: there's Sillery, a gossipy academic who thinks himself a power broker; the calculating Widmerpool, who believes he's a bit of a rake; Bernard, "in his capacity of man-of-the-world"; Pardoe, "taking the ends of his own moustache with both hands, as if about to tear it off and reveal himself in a new identity." Powell, in his stealthy way, has ended up taking such types further than his contemporaries have done, including Evelyn Waugh. A long life of watching from his personal hideout led him, well ahead of the intellectual fashion, to regard most people as products of fiction. In the last volume of "Dance," Jenkins describes the lives of others as "narratives that have been unfolding for years beside one's own." It's an echo of his insistence, earlier in the sequence, that people have "very different narrative gifts," that their stories vary in both interest and credibility, and that what passes for human knowledge is no more than the sum of the undependable tales we have told one another.

In one early volume of the sequence, Jenkins is invited home by Widmerpool to meet his mother, at her flat in Victoria. She, it becomes clear, lives vicariously through her son, echoing the experiences that he has re-created and filtered for her, and adding her own emphases. "I hear you know the Gorings," she prattles to Nicholas. "It seems such a pity they have allowed Barbara to run so wild.... There really appears to be something a trifle queer about Lord Aberavon's grandchildren." Widmerpool is embarrassed and tries to shut her up, telling her, "You don't know anything about it." The torrent flows on: " 'There doesn't seem any sign of Eleanor getting married yet,' said Mrs. Widmerpool, almost dreamily, as if she were descrying in the depths of the gas-fire a vision invisible to the rest of us, revealing the unending cavalcade of Eleanor's potential suitors." We laugh, but we may also notice that in terms of vicariousness there's not much to choose between Mrs. Widmerpool—or Jenkins himself at Cabourg/Balbec—and us reading about these characters in a novel.

SUCH subtleties would be hard to convey in any other medium. Still, it's strange that none of Powell's work has yet been televised—not even the hilarious "From a View to a Death" (1933). Set in the rural England of foxhunting, of village pageants about the life of Charles II, and of a squire who in the privacy of his dressing room puts on a sequinned black gown before settling down to a book on the breeding of retrievers, the nove could have been made for "Masterpiece Theatre." Powell's farces usually have a melancholy undertow, but "From a View to a Death" is pure comedy: "A wild-eyed woman wearing a hat like a beehive was whispering a mass of information—it might have been her memoirs or an epic poem—into the ear of her elder son." His friend and admirer Kingsley Amis said it was his favorite Powell novel.

But it is "Dance" that TV producers in Britain now have their eyes on. An option has been bought by a London-based Canadian director, Alvin Rakoff and he has signed up an Emmy-bedecked team: Christopher Morahan the director of "The Jewel in the Crown," and the dramatist Hugh Whitemore whose screenplays include "84 Charing Cross Road." In January, on the basis of a draft by Whitemore, Channel 4 gave Rakoff the go-ahead for four self-contained two-hour feature films. By 1997, "A Dance to the Music of Time" should be ready for screening.

Powell himself was skeptical, groaning that such schemes had come up "over and over again" and, sooner or later, had always failed. One attempt was dropped by the BBC in 1986. Some years earlier there had been a scheme involving Dennis Potter, soon after his success with "Pennies from Heaven." According to the intended producer, Kenith Trodd this went aground on the BBC's insistence that he and Potter sign exclusive contracts, but there was also a clash between the novelist and Potter, whose style—staccato, aggressively anarchic and sexy—is about as close to the novelist's as Quentin Tarantino's is to Henry James's. When Potter was asked down to The Chantry to discuss the project over lunch, he made it clear that he thought the novelist snobbishly overprotective of his own writing. Describing the meeting to me, Powell looked irritably around his library, as though the playwright might still be skulking there somewhere. "It was the only time I've felt that as a novelist I belonged to a frightfully low-class community," he said, and then confided, "He's a very tricky customer, Potter." Tactfully, but perhaps also to cheer her husband up, Lady Violet said firmly, "He *has died.*"

Kenith Trodd confesses that if Pot-

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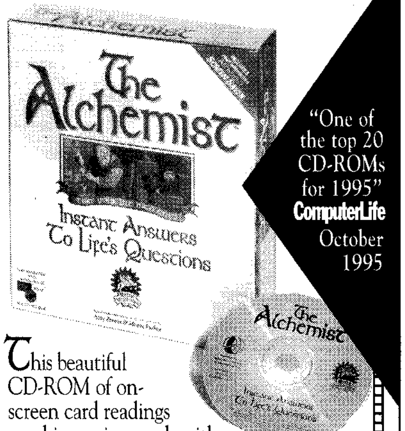

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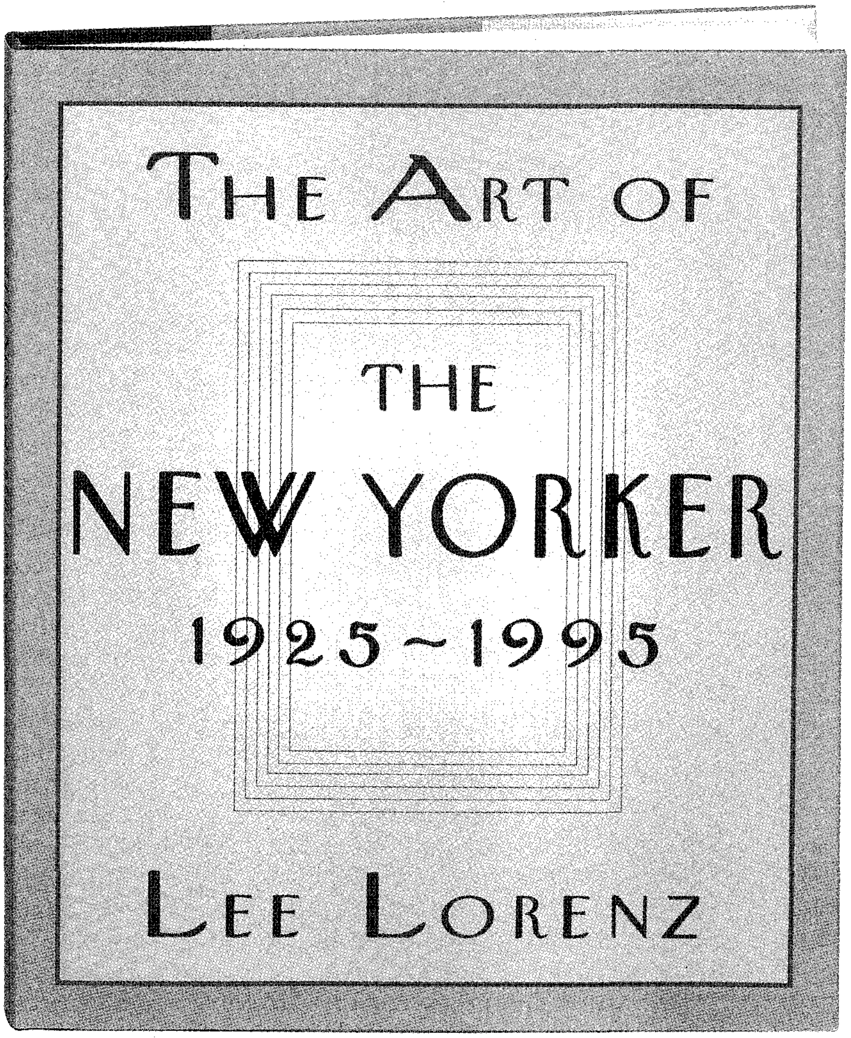

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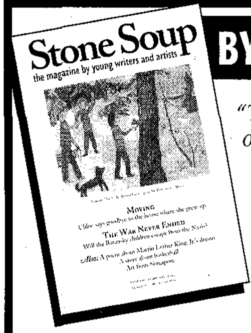

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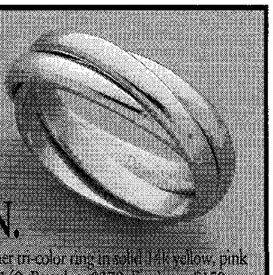

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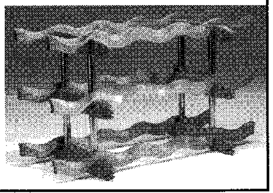

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ter's screenplay had gone ahead it would probably have caricatured the narrator. He fears that the Whitemore-Morahan partnership, on the other hand, could turn out too reverential. But Powell's son Tristram, himself a gifted and original director, points out that the sequence presents difficulties that are "intrinsic to my father's being a good novelist rather than a dramatist." The medium resists the most distinctive element of what Powell has engineered on the page—a complex and fluid narrative movement, sliding from Jenkins's cold-eyed description of immediate events to his more emotionally colored memories of related episodes, and on to accounts given to him by other characters, whether as gossip or in reports that have their own classical kind of objectivity. It's among the strengths of the book that, as Tristram Powell says, "a single, quite banal phrase can be gone into and connected with people's memories."

Beyond this, there's the sharp anecdotal clarity that Powell learned from John Aubrey, and also from Aubrey's near-contemporary Alexander Pope. The resemblances include a paradoxical coupling of Jenkins's relish of oddity and extremism with his intensely normative attitude. (Widmerpool's wearing an overcoat of the wrong kind at school is seen as automatically ridiculous.) Which brings one back to Powell's interest in class.

HIS critics often mistake this for simple snobbery. But notions of superiority are less important to his world view than two other elements. One of these, of course, is trend-bucking. Powell has said that there's nothing more "real" about a factory than about a palace, and behind this sideswipe at the attitudes of some of his own generation of writers, especially in the thirties, lies his conviction that their egalitarianism often masked political volatility, an eye for self-promotion, and a journalistic limitation of perspective. (Powell's second novel, "Venusberg," has fun with a fake who's always writing things like "It is among the kindly, everyday folk that you find garnered-in the best hearts.")

Powell's bigger point about class, though, lies in a dream of connectedness, and it's here that "Dance" may have the most to offer readers in a post-historical age. The first volume of the British edition of his autobiography begins with a laborious and much mocked demonstration of how the Powells may be traceable back to the third-century Romano-British chieftain Coel Hên Gautepec, a.k.a. Old King Cole. But Powell is just as happy supposing in the "Journals" that he may be linked to the rock singer Roger Daltrey, on the ground that "Daltry is a Lincolnshire name, some of them connected with my mother's family." In "A Dance to the Music of Time" everyone is joined to everyone else, whether through kinship, marriage, acquaintance, or sheer coincidence, and a minor character who is scarcely noticed in one episode will usually turn up again somewhere else. The same laws operate in the book's views of the past and of art. The (in some respects disappointing) last volume, "Hearing Secret Harmonies," centers on a sixties hippie cult that echoes an earlier movement led by an Aleister Crowley-like transcendental magician who appears in the sixth volume during a flashback to the months before the First World War. But contemplation of the hippies also takes the narrator's thoughts to Renaissance literature: Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso," he recalls, is the story of a dropout.

In similarly cinquecento terms, Powell once described his first novel, "Afternoon Men," as an "urban pastoral." The phrase fits all his work, whose consoling comic myths derive from his private ones. The first volume of his autobiography tells how, because of his father's military career, Powell as a child moved house so often that he couldn't always have said where he lived. It becomes clear that he was often very lonely. This is something that, as so often happens when we read his books, we learn "indirectly"—through the reports of his housemaster, which Powell himself plays down. But it is Powell who quotes them, just as it is Jenkins who narrates the novel from which, Waring-like, he sometimes seems to wish to disappear. It's not surprising that a lonely child who didn't know his own home should have imagined a world in which everyone knows everyone else, where no one and nothing is ever entirely lost from view, and where coincidence is the rule.

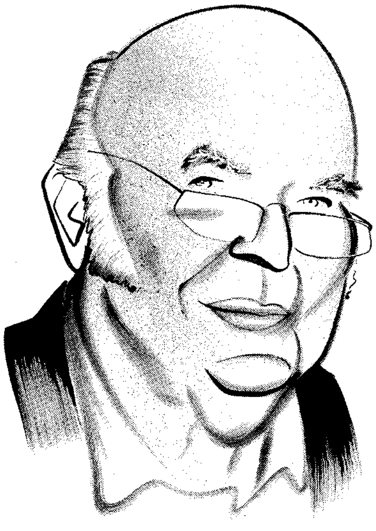
In his books, even when life seems to be almost at a standstill it can't stop making small dance steps. Near the end of my visit with Powell, while his wife was seeing about sherry, and the sun inched across the library windows, he became absorbed in the jacket photograph on "Messengers of Day," the second volume of his autobiography, which

I had brought for him to sign. The picture shows a corner house where he lodged as a young man almost seventy years ago in Shepherd Market, a discreet red-light district in Mayfair. A taxi of a vintage hard to connect with a living person waits in the street. For a long time, the author doubled himself over this picture, slowly rubbing a finger on a ground-floor window of the house. Was he thinking of Evelyn Waugh, Henry Green, and other outlived friends of those remote days? Eventually, he looked up and said, in a deep murmur, "That was my bedroom. Tarts used to come and knock on it." As if on cue, there was a rap at the front door. "There's one now," Lady Violet said brightly. But it was only my taxi, come to take me to the station. ♦

YOUNG TENNESSEE

The long-awaited biography of Tennessee Williams.

BY JOHN LAHR



Lyle Leverich

OVER dinner one evening in 1978, the director and producer Lyle Leverich told Tennessee Williams that the playwright's racy, best-selling "Memoirs" had done him no favors, and that what was needed was a serious book about his life in the theatre. "Baby, you write it," Williams said. His suggestion seemed the latest caprice of a man who had turned his "leftover life" into a legend of folly. At the time, Leverich was unpublished, and what had convinced Williams was Leverich's unprinted 1977 letter to the *Times Book Review* taking Robert Brustein to task for his uncharitable review of the fine "Tennessee Williams' Letters to Donald Windham." Williams liked to characterize himself as a sly fox. ("We of the artistic world are . . . the little gray foxes and all the rest are the hounds," he wrote to a friend.) Just how sly Williams was is borne out not only in his great plays but in his choice of Leverich, whose twelve-year labor of love, "Tom: The Unknown Tennessee Williams" (Crown; $35), which takes the reader from his birth, in 1911, up to 1945 and the triumph of "The Glass Menagerie," is finally doing its work in the world.

Leverich completed "Tom" in 1990, seven years after Williams choked to death in a New York hotel room. Leverich had two letters of authorization from Williams, giving him access to all of his unpublished diaries, letters, and manuscripts. But the biography—the first of two projected volumes—was blocked by Lady Maria St. Just, one of Williams' literary trustees. (I wrote about Leverich's battle in this magazine, and I am acknowledged in his book.) Her death, in 1994, freed the playwright's estate to allow publication. The book is a tremendous accomplishment, and Leverich is an appealing biographer: modest, thorough, balanced, and passionate. In prose that is clear—if not scintillating—he bushwhacks a path through a morass of gossip and myth, and prepares the way for a more subtle interpretation of the man and his plays. This is the first major reassessment of the life of America's greatest playwright.

"I must endure & endure & *still endure*," Williams wrote in his journal in 1939, the year he changed his writing name from Thomas Lanier Williams to Tennessee Williams. His struggle for his sanity and for his literary life are the battles that are waged in the pages of "Tom." In a 1960 letter to Donald Windham, Williams wrote of himself, "Out of the sheer surfeit of being beaten down, he gathered out of his father's fierce blood the power to rise somehow. And

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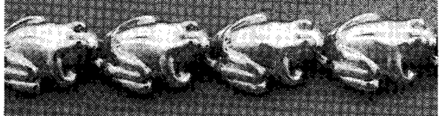

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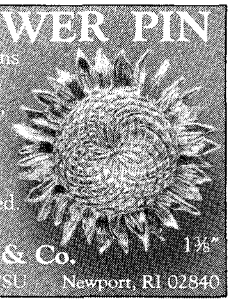

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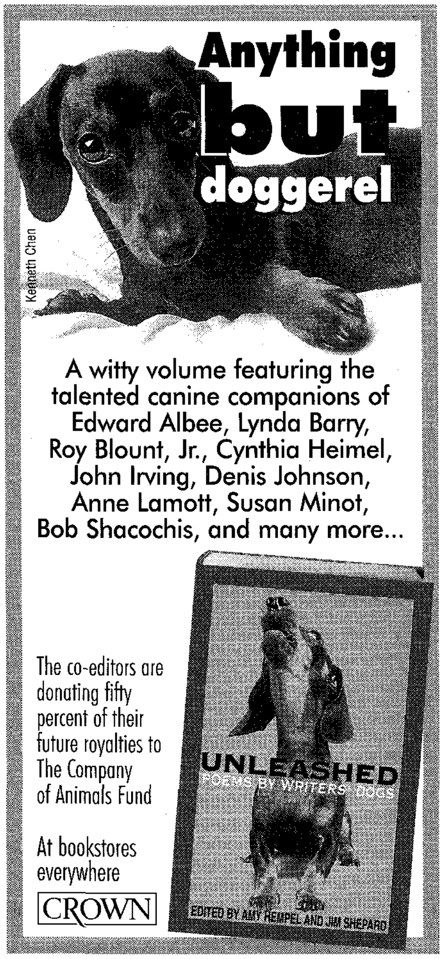

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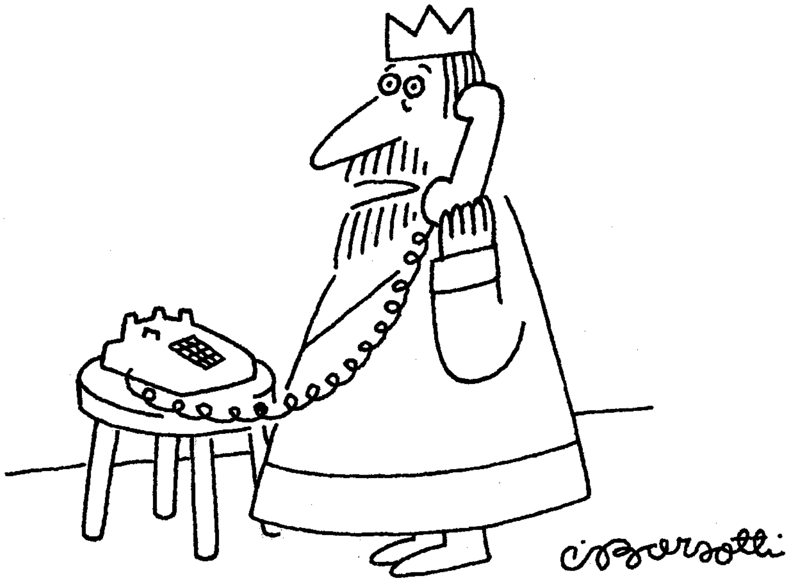
how could that rise be gentle?" Emotional violence was built into both sides of the writer's parental equation, but it was easier to spot in his hard-drinking, boisterous, abusive father, Cornelius Coffin Williams, known as C.C.—a travelling salesman turned frustrated shoe-company executive. C.C., who had part of one ear bitten off in a poker fight, came from patrician Tennessee-pioneer stock. Williams remembered him as a dismissive, gruff presence. "He looked awfully big," he said. "And it was not a benign bigness. You wanted to shrink away from it, hide yourself." Williams hid in his writing. His mother, Edwina, was the beautiful, spoiled only child of an Episcopal minister who styled herself a Southern belle, although she was born in Ohio. A chatterbox and a snob, she took pride in Tom's accomplishments and called him "mah writin' son." Tom called "Miss Edwina" a "monolith of puritanism," and his younger brother, Dakin, referred to her as "president of the anti-sex league."

Sex was one of several issues that helped to turn Edwina and C.C.'s marriage, which began in 1907, into a lethal mismatch. To C.C., Edwina was a frigid, nagging prig who lavished all her affection on the children. To Edwina, C.C. was a drunken brute who terrorized the family. Until 1918, when Edwina and the children moved from her father's rectory, in Columbus, Mississippi, to St. Louis, the young wife had barely cohabited with the man she married; she had also never cooked or kept house. The move was traumatic for everyone, especially the children, who became introverted and fearful in the volatile atmosphere of what Williams called hi "haunted household." Williams came t see himself as a genetic hodgepodge— "makeshift arrangement" of "warring elements." He inherited alcoholism fro his father's side of the family and a alarming propensity for mental illnes from his mother's. Leverich argues tha Williams' fierce appetites and nomadi nature owe something to C.C., and tha his ambition and rigor—which fed th fretfulness of his desires—were largely result of his mother's influence.

"If I have a problem, I invent peopl in parallel circumstances, create paralle tensions," Williams once said. From th outset, writing for him was not so muc a vocation as a salvation. In his poems stories, and plays he fought free of hi oppressive family and his fears of annihilation, that "hot woe" he called "th blue devils." The punishing effects of th family legacy are chronicled at length i the biography. Williams' beloved olde sister, Rose, overwhelmed by her father' indifference and her mother's expectations, was stuck at home with no avenu of escape. "I think the petals of her min had simply closed through fear," Williams wrote in a 1943 short story entitle "Portrait of a Girl in Glass." Tom vente his anger on the page—from his twentie until the end of his life he wrote abou eight hours a day—but Rose, who had n creative means of expressing the famil torment, turned her anger against hersel she was confined in a mental hospital i



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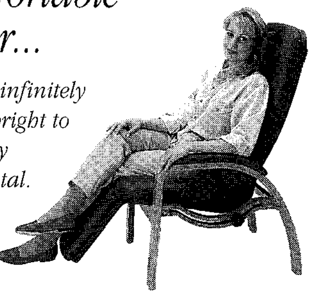

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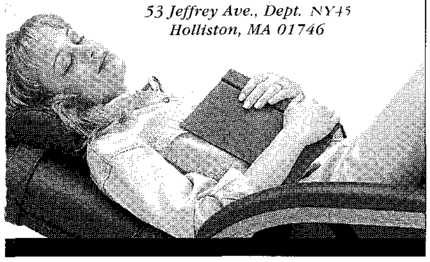

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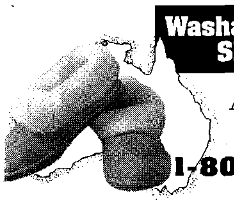

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1937, at the age of twenty-seven, and was lobotomized in 1943. One of Leverich's many extraordinary literary finds is a letter that Rose wrote to Tom from the state hospital in Farmington, Missouri, saying, "I'm trying not to die, making every effort not to do so. The memory of your gentle, sleepy sick body and face are such a comfort to me. I feel sure you would love me if I murdered some one."

LEVERICH superbly details Williams' dreamy, tortuous emergence as both poet and playwright. "My whole life has been a series of escapes, physical or psychological, more miraculous than any of Houdini's," Tom wrote to Molly Day Thacher, who awarded the young playwright a hundred-dollar prize from the Group Theatre. We follow Williams through his experiences as a hapless itinerant college student throughout the thirties, interrupted by a three-year enslavement in the drudgery of a job at the shoe factory where his father worked. We read how Williams, who had no sexual experience until he was twenty-six, struggled to contain his homosexual yearnings ("I must get my mind off my body and onto other things," he wrote in his diary), and then surrendered to them in his first full-fledged love affair, with the young dancer Kip Kiernan, whom he met in 1940 in Provincetown, where he was spending the summer. Leverich also traces Williams' hectic, joyful trips south to New Orleans and west to California, where he had a hilarious stint as a Hollywood screenwriter for "Metro-Goldmine-Mayer" in the early forties. But while Williams' sexual adventures and his wanderings were at first an assertion of his romantic self-aggrandizement, in later years they became a refuge from his chronic self-loathing.

Williams was always amazed by his own survival. "Why should you be there, little Rose," he wrote in his diary, "and *me here*?—no reason—anywhere—Why?—why?" As his erotic and intellectual life matured, so did the power of his writing. His struggle to keep his heart alive, which became the central drama of his adulthood, is already present in Leverich's account of his early years. "I must be able to be a post-war artist . . . to perform the paradox of being hard and yet soft," the playwright wrote in his diary in 1942. He dreamed of a new kind of theatre, which would free the stage from the polemical

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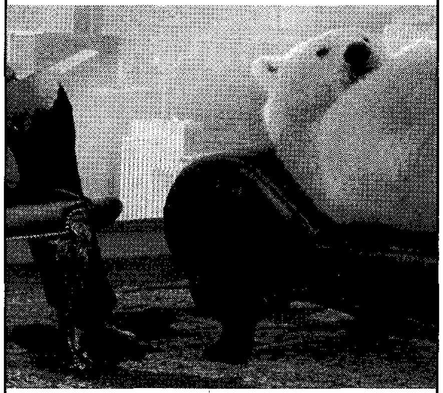

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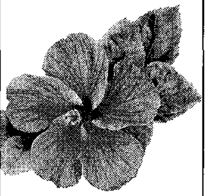

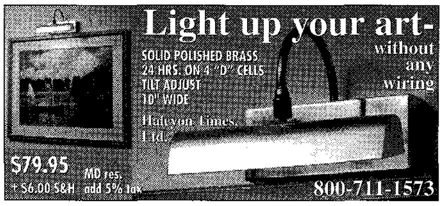

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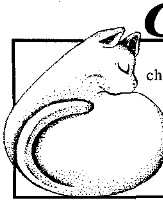

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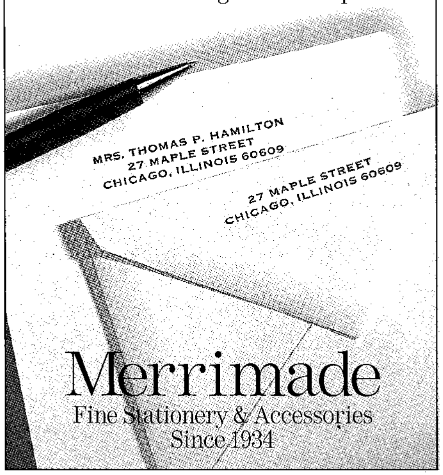

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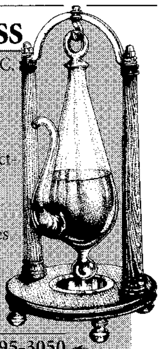

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and the naturalistic through an impressionistic use of "cumulative scenes." He called it "sculptural drama" and likened it to "a restrained type of dance."

Tom Williams had been raised under the strong, pious influence of his grandfather the Reverend Walter Dakin; Tennessee Williams created himself under the liberating influence of Hart Crane and D. H. Lawrence. The Christian and the Romantic sense of self constantly vied for the playwright's consciousness, in a conflict between goodness and greatness which the plays act out. The pages of this long, lonely saga of struggle are filled with prayer. "I am praying tonight. After all prayer is quite a necessary thing," Williams wrote in his diary. And, in another entry, "Oh God, help me to do what I should do—be brave and live a free life."

Williams finally and forever engineered his escape from poverty and anonymity in 1944, with "The Glass Menagerie." He called it "my first quiet play, and perhaps my last." He had seen his first Broadway-bound work, the fascinating "Battle of Angels," end in fiasco in a Boston tryout in 1941; and he had lived through the disappointments of "Stairs to the Roof" and his collaboration with Donald Windham on "You Touched Me!" "I want an *audience*," Williams wrote to his agent, Audrey Wood. "If I get *that*, I am satisfied, for then I can throw in their faces the things they won't take till they know me, all the little, helpless, unspoken-for crowd of sheep-like creatures I seem to find in the world and wish Quixotically to be the equally little and helpless voice of." When "The Glass Menagerie" opened in New York, in 1945, it received twenty-four curtain calls. Two years earlier, Tom had confided to his diary, "I want to go back to *creation*. Strongly, brightly, with a fresh and free spirit and a driving power. To do the monument." Now he had achieved it. He had found his voice and his public.

What remained ahead was what Williams later called "the catastrophe of success": a twenty-year period of unprecedented theatrical creativity, whose epic achievements were matched with epic emotional collapses. But to explore the rest of Williams' extraordinary and emblematic American life the reader will have to wait for Leverich's second volume, which he is now writing. I, for one, am counting the days. ♦

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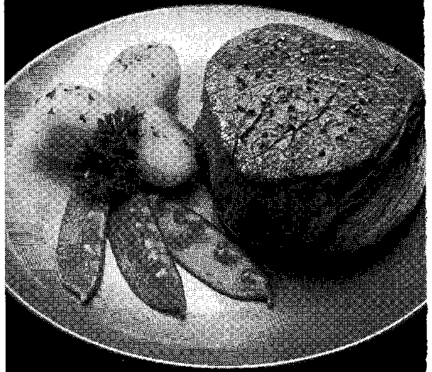

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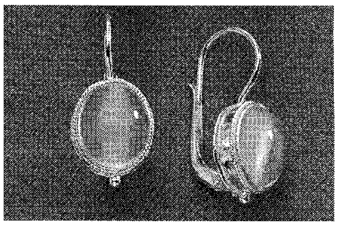

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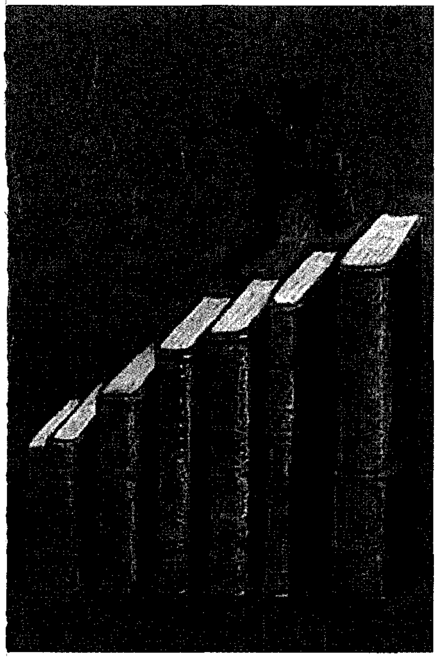

All the Days and Nights
by William Maxwell
(Knopf; $25)

The collected stories of a plainspoken American master. The book includes Maxwell's famous life studies of the Upper East Side and twenty-one "improvisations"—stories written in a mode that is part fable, part fairy tale—but the heart of the collection is a group of stories set in the Illinois town variously called Lincoln and Draperville, which is for Maxwell what Combray was for Proust: the place where he first learned about love and loss and the mysterious connections that constitute small-town society. Maxwell's repeated journeys back are conducted not in a spirit of longing, however, but with the hopeful expectancy of an archeologist, who believes that the sediment of memory contains infinite treasure.

Letters from London
by Julian Barnes
(Vintage; $13)

Yes, there will always be an England, and Barnes covered it for the magazine from 1989 to 1994—years that saw the opening of the Chunnel, the advent of John Major ("the frolicker standing next to the sole remaining chair when the music happened to stop"), and the publication of "Diana: Her True Story." Barnes makes a divine comedy of it all, but saves his incisive best for Mrs. Thatcher, who causes him to coin, among other delights, the verb "to handbag": what Maggie did to anyone "who uttered a squeak against her."

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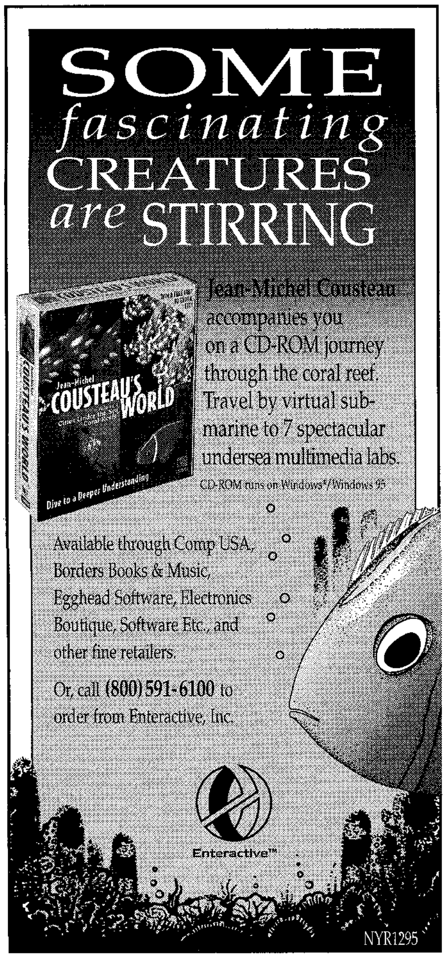
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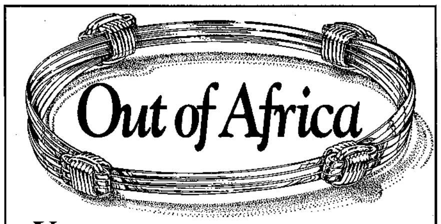
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An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales
by Oliver Sacks
(Knopf; $24)

Temple Grandin is an autistic with a Ph.D. who understands cows better than people; Mr. I. is a painter who suddenly goes color-blind; Carl Bennett, who has had Tourette's syndrome since his childhood, is a surgeon. Dr. Sacks describes his clinical meditations as "tales of metamorphosis, brought about by neurological chance." The title stems from a joke made by Grandin, who frequently feels like a stranger in a strange land. The author, however, is really the anthropologist here, and, by examining the creative adaptations of his subjects with such care, he instills in us a sense of gratitude that we do in fact share the same planet.

The Matisse Stories
by A. S. Byatt
(Random House; $17)

A middle-aged academic wreaks havoc at her chic hair salon; a cleaning woman for an "artistic" family picks up more around the house than her employers have bargained for; an anorexic art student with a grudge against Matisse accuses her adviser of molesting her. These three stories explore the sterility engendered by order and the ugliness born of despair, and in each of them one glimpses, like a flash of vermillion, a bright streak of rage.

Cold Snap
by Thom Jones
(Little, Brown; $19.95)

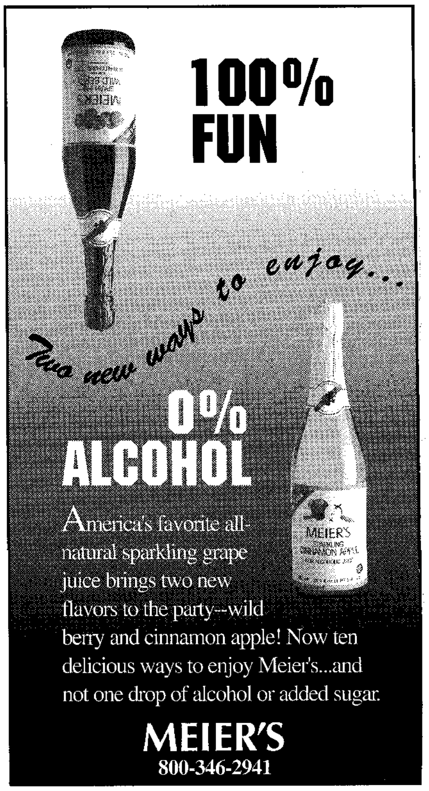
A baboon with a taste for Canadian Mist mimics his master's struggles with hemorrhoids; an ad writer in Africa is swept up in a malarial delirium that seems only to fuel his appetite for sex and spicy curry; a Hollywood plastic surgeon continues to pummel a punching bag as a heart attack knocks him to the floor. Jones fills these stories—as damning as they are redemptive—with characters who walk a tightrope with only a net of doubletalk, twisted pride, and pharmaceuticals beneath them.

So It Goes
by Eamon Grennan
(Graywolf; $14)

Grennan's fourth book of poems—from elegies on his parents' deaths to celebrations of the natural world—is an occasion to savor the restorative power of observation. His lyrics show how the details of our surroundings return with charged clarity after periods of grief, and his remarkably supple sentences embrace both "the silence of almost infinite possibility and that / explosion of things as they are."

Seduction Theory
by Thomas Beller
(Norton; $21)

"Tell me something totally self-defeating," a young woman says to her boyfriend as they snuggle in bed in one of these stories. "Confess the sort of thing a calcu-



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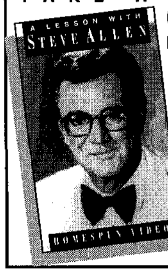

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lated self-assured man would never confess to a woman." The lovers—who proceed to swap bad P.R. about themselves and end up both wary and thrilled—are typical of Beller's characters. They rush headlong into adult entanglements while reserving the right to energetic adolescent self-examination. Beller suggests that consciousness on the make is sexier than a good roll in the hay and is, moreover, the true source of tenderness.

Soul Says: Recent Poetry
by Helen Vendler
(Belknap/Harvard; $24.95)

Twenty-one essays, in which Vendler demonstrates not only the formal grasp of the great English instructor she is but the metaphorical wit of the poets she writes about. John Ashbery's single-poem book "Flow Chart" is "a monitor screen registering a moving EEG"; Albert Goldbarth displays the "zoological adventurousness of a Darwin." This collection evokes the clamorous richness of the current poetic scene, in which, as Vendler observes in a piece on Adrienne Rich and Jorie Graham, "many poems are coming to resemble cloud chambers full of colliding protons rather than well-wrought urns."

Penchants and Places
by Brad Leithauser
(Knopf; $25)

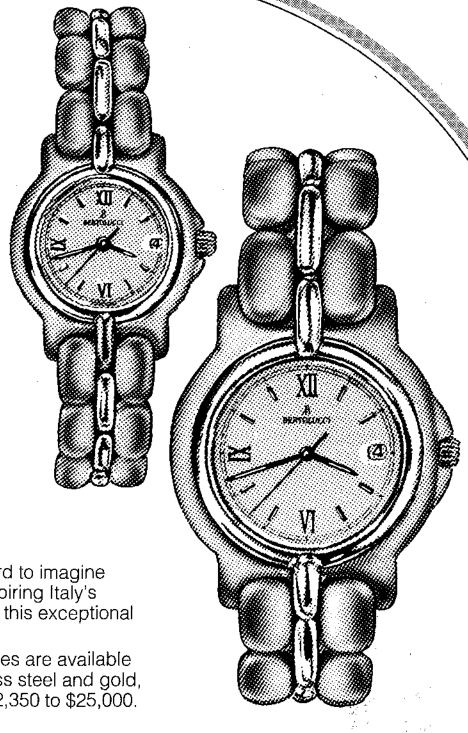
Icelandic sagas, computer chess, the futurist visions of Kobo Abe: in these wide-ranging essays, Leithauser is always pushing against the boundaries of what's conceivable. Will we soon be able to "download" our minds into computers? Have we banished ghosts too resolutely from our consciousness? This far-flung traveller delights most in mapping places like Kasparov's tiny domain and Calvino's invisible cities—realms that have been peopled by the imagination.

Polite Society
by Melanie Sumner
(Houghton Mifflin; $21.95)

In these interconnected stories, Darren—a white Southern girl—has somehow ended up as an English teacher for the Peace Corps in Senegal. Not exactly qualified for the job, she rollerblades around her empty house in Dakar, listening to Billie Holiday. Darren reaches, in turn, for friendship, sex, *gris-gris* charms, a beer—all in the hope of arriving at a steady place.

Savages
by Joe Kane
(Knopf; $25)

An absorbing contribution to an improbable genre: the environmental thriller. In the Ecuadorian Amazon the author befriends Moi, a Huaorani warrior who is learning new strategies in his fight to keep American oil companies from destroying his homeland. Moi not only smuggles Kane past Ecuadorian military checkpoints into Huaorani territory but also returns with him to confront the savages in the conference halls of Washington—a



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scene that certainly tops Jimmy Stewart's arrival in Congress.

Quality Time
by Edward Koren
(Villard; $16)

In these cartoons, Koren's winsome, beschnozzled characters cope with home life: Grandpa Windsong is asked for another story from the sixties; a dog gets depressed when there are no messages for him on the answering machine; a toddler produces his first fax. Shaggy humans and furry creatures of varying recognizability talk in psychobabble, slang, and politically sensitive terms to say what they mean or what they think they mean, as the artist bops from one loony, familiar situation to another.

The Diaries of Dawn Powell: 1931-1965
edited by Tim Page
(Steerforth; $32)

Socialist theatre, all-night parties, advice-dispensing taxi-drivers, perfume girls at Bergdorf's: as a diarist, Powell was an urban magpie, and a little bit of everything ended up in her journals. They are also brimming with agonizings, professional and domestic, and razor-sharp remarks ("Lou feels that a cold wife who has a headache is a pure one, a high-class one"). But, as much as anything, these diaries read like a love letter to the city itself, the only place, one feels, where an entry such as the following could have been written: "Went to tea for Bernard Sobel at Pierre's; Ogden Nash and I got tight and pigged all the cocktails we could find." Or this one, from May 24, 1940: "Lunch with Max Perkins. War everywhere."

The Rarest of the Rare
by Diane Ackerman
(Random House; $23)

The author has carved out a niche ("Being close to albatrosses," she writes, "is an experience somewhere between the spiritual and the sexual") as rare as the endangered species she crisscrosses the globe to witness: golden lion tamarins in the rain forest, scrub jays in the scrublands. "Who would drink from a cup," she asks at the end of a day when she broke three ribs climbing a volcano to see the nesting site of the short-tailed albatross, "when they can drink from the source?"

The Art of The New Yorker: 1925-1995
by Lee Lorenz
(Knopf; $40)

In this birthday book of *New Yorker* art, virtually all the artists are represented—Arno, Addams, Price, Steig, Steinberg, Mary Petty, et al.—in profusion and in context. Lorenz, the magazine's third art editor, suavely runs the gamut from Rea Irvin to Art Spiegelman, and doesn't skimp on esoterica like the old Tuesday art meetings and the artists' convalescent Wednesday lunches. Amid the cartoons and the covers and the insidey tale is a history of twentieth-century American graphic art.

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MUSICAL EVENTS

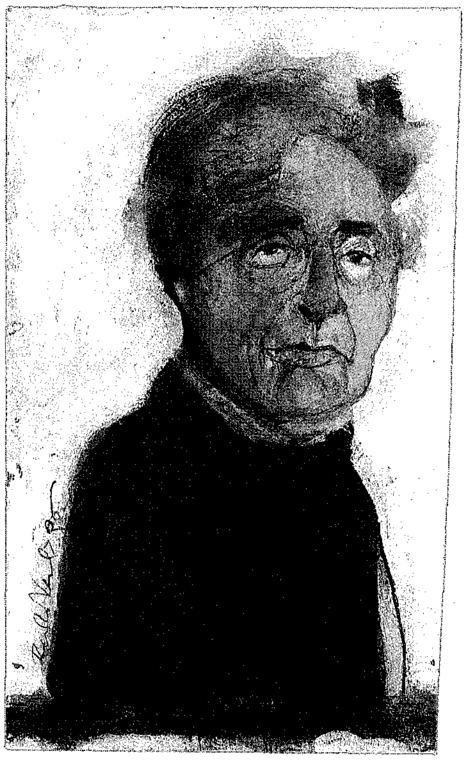
BERIO SOLO

A revelatory program of the composer's "Sequenzas."

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

I WISH there were more concerts like the one at the 92nd Street Y last month when a program of asterpieces, mostly in masterly perrmances, was played before an enusiastic audience that included the mposer: Luciano erio. So many ncerts are comemorations of mposers gone. ere we could be lebrating. Beo's presence proded at once a ttern and a fos for general elight, since we uld share in his ppreciation of hat was perrmed, if in the astened knowlge that our paripation couldn't more than paral (a remark of is during the e-concert dission—"I am y own best lisner"—conveyed t so much pride defensiveness as a melancholy recgnition of what in music can't be mmunicated), and, at the same time, irect to him our gratitude for what ad been written.

While the music was happening, ough, this distinction between the ritten and the performed was largely ffaced. What we were hearing was the ll complement of Berio's "Sequenzas," line of solo pieces composed at irregur intervals through the last thirty-seven ears. But what we were hearing was also a succession of individual musical moments occurring now. Because nearly all the musicians performed from memory, nearly all of them released themselves from the encumbrance of the past tense represented physically by printed paper. This was useful in many ways that can be applied to music other than Berio's: a musician without a script can perform entirely to the audience, not to the page; to commit music to memory is to take possession of it, and also to pay it homage (both highly positive gestures); and performance is liberated from such extraneous and bathetic actions as turning pages. Beyond all this, however, the "Sequenzas" benefit from extemporaneity quite particularly. Visual attention is fixed on performer and instrument, and this is where the musical attention is, too. Though the "Sequenzas" require consummate musicianship, they're not primarily showpieces—like, say, Paganini Caprices—in hearing which we can usefully be kept aware that the performer is fulfilling prescribed obligations. The dialogue that Berio has his virtuosos engage in is much less with note-blackened texts than with their instruments and with themselves. The notes are there to acti-



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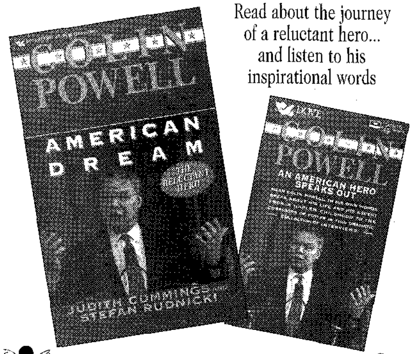

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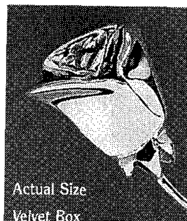

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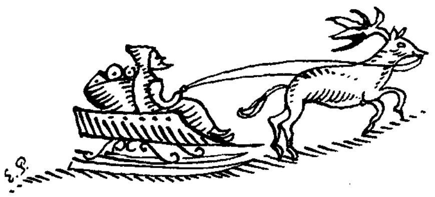
vate the instrument and the performing persona, not the other way around. The music points toward a condition in which we might say not that Claude Delangle played "Sequenza IXb" on the alto saxophone but, rather, that "Sequenza IXb" played the alto saxophone as handled by Mr. Delangle, or even that the piece played Mr. Delangle as saxophonist. Difficulties in the music aren't just acrobatic feats to astonish; more important, they're opportunities to display new aspects of the instrument—its sound, its technical possibilities, its weight in musical history—and of the performing self. The work isn't so much object as means.

There was a splendid demonstration of all this when, some time after Mr. Delangle's performance, David Krakauer returned to the same text in its clarinet version, called "Sequenza IXa." Some of the differences had to do with differences between the instruments: how the player's hands are more widely separated on the saxophone, so that they seem to behave almost like separate animals as they tremble on the keys (tremolandos and quick figurations being thick on the ground in this piece); how the saxophone has associations with music and venues different from the clarinet's; how the saxophone's habitual tempo is slower; how its tone works to draw the listener in, whereas the clarinet is more inclined to project out. Differences between the players must begin here, too, since people choose instruments with which they're in sympathy and, in turn, have their performing personalities molded by the instruments they play. Mr. Delangle could find his way to a comparative reticence and a sly sensuality, whereas Mr. Krakauer was more abruptly present. The emphatic high note that keeps punctuating the middle part of the piece was a beautiful, abstract musical effect from Mr. Delangle—a hard ceiling above soft, malleable activity—but became a strident alarm from Mr. Krakauer, who swung his instrument up, bell forward, for each attack. (Here was another difference between the instruments: the clarinet is more mobile.) The melody a little later was smoothly modelled by Mr. Delangle, yelled as something like an Eastern European folk tune by Mr. Krakauer, who surely showed here his experience as a klezmer musician. That a player could be provided with the opportunity to fashion so vivid a self-portrait—some of whose features (klezmer, in particular) can't have been known to Berio in 1980—was a remarkable tribute to the provocative, evocative power of the "Sequenzas."

If what was practically the same piece could give rise to two such divergent performances, variety abounded in the program as a whole: variety enough—and also joy enough—to lift the occasion above the potential disaster of interleaved poetic messages on tape from the Italian writer Edoardo Sanguineti. The one comedy item, "Sequenza V," for trombone, was as funny and touching as a clown show ought to be; the performer was Michele Lomuto, in white sneakers, with an enormous red flower in the lapel of his tailcoat. Alice Giles, in an acute performance of the harp piece, "Sequenza II," revealed how Berio typically discovers new possibilities in the instrument, especially in its spiky top range. Sabrina Giuliani, playing "Sequenza VI," for viola, gave the most unflustered account I've ever heard of its quadruple-stop scrubbing, which was the more intense for being exact; the tune at the end, after all this wire-brush music, sounded like the first melody in the world. The trumpeter Gabriele Cassone, in "Sequenza X," was superbly in command of the physical swivels from brilliant, forward ejaculations to notes played into the open grand piano behind him, these making echoes that seemed to be disappearing down long hallways. Luisa Castellani made a powerful dramatic vignette of the voice piece, "Sequenza III," in her own terms: not flamboyant, in the manner of Cathy Berberian, for whom the piece was written, but centered, with eyes narrowed, in obsessive muttering. This was another demonstration of how the "Sequenzas" are designed to accommodate the signatures of those who perform them. (The performers at this concert were, for the most part, Berio's chosen practitioners, and many of them have recorded their "Sequenzas." Mr. Delangle's solo recital on BIS, including both "Sequenza IXb" and a soprano-saxophone version of the oboe's "Sequenza VII," is generally available; I'd also recommend a delightful pe formance of the guitar piece, "Sequen XI," by its destined exponent, Eliot Fis on a new MusicMasters record.)



Diverse as they are (because matched the natures of diverse instruments), the "S quenzas" are also a family, but with one o man out: the flute solo which was the fi composed. This wanders and darts ar skitters, as if touching on and sometim exploring different parts of a landscap whereas all the others take paths that i clude movement in circles, even in whor and turnings back to branch out again. Th move as memory moves, mimicking t course by which they arrive at performan from the musician's memory and from t memory of the instrument. "Sequenza X for example, is an exhalation from flamenc while the violin in "Sequenza VIII" h an image of Bach's D-minor Chacon at the back of its mind—though with front brain it can spin off on new cours such as the pianissimo evolving melo that was simply and magically spun he by Carlo Chiarappa. "Sequenza I" com from a moment before the series kne quite what it was about, but in the co text of so many predecessors the piec capriciousness is cherishable, and Pau Robison made it especially so.

At the other end of the line, "S quenza XII," for bassoon, was bei played for the first time in this count by Pascal Gallois, for whom it was com posed, earlier this year. Perhaps becau this is an instrument with rather litt solo history, Berio treats it in an utte new way, writing long, slow glissand that have the massive substance an strain of some great piece of wood bei bent. This astonishing piece—which w astonishingly played—demands that to be sustained for much longer than t span of a breath, and, indeed, Mr. Ga lois, using circular breathing, bare moved his lips from his reed in all twen minutes of the work's duration.

Next will be a "Sequenza" for a cordion, which Berio is now workin on, and there have also been inte mittent reports of one for percussio Other candidates for the future mu include cello, horn, and harpsichor And maybe there should be a piec for the virtuoso Mr. Berio honors an obliges throughout the series: a piece—possibly made with electronic sound so needing no performer—that woul be a "Sequenza" for the listening ear.

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CORRECTION

In the "White-Hot Skiing" special advertising section (Nov. 27, 1995), one of the advertisers, the historic Strater Hotel, Durango, Colorado, had an incorrect phone number listed. The correct phone number is 1-800-227-4431, ext. 450.

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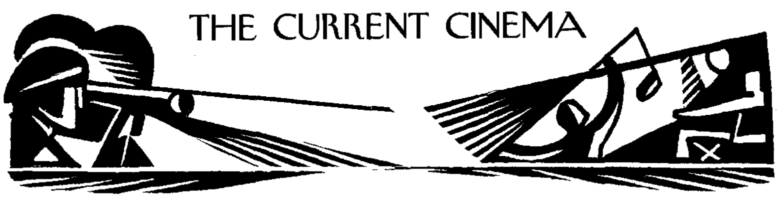

FIDELITY AND INFIDELITY

A charming adaptation of Jane Austen, and a muddled "Othello."

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

IN "Sense and Sensibility," Ang Lee's film adaptation of Jane Austen's first published novel, common sense wins out over uncommon sensibility, and, although the contest is obviously rigged, the outcome seems just. In this story, "sense" means practical wisdom, social tact, and the ability to moderate emotion with reason, and is represented by Elinor Dashwood (Emma Thompson, who also wrote the screenplay). "Sensibility" means the sort of temperament that holds passion as the highest virtue and cultivates (or indulges) it at every opportunity; this world view is embodied by Marianne Dashwood (Kate Winslet), Elinor's younger, more beautiful, and more reckless sister. (A third sister, Margaret, played by Emilie Françoise, is, at eleven, too young to stand for anything.) After the death of their father, the Dashwood girls and their mother (Gemma Jones) leave their comfortable home in Sussex and settle in a cramped cottage in Devon. Elinor, occupying herself with domestic chores and the management of the family's small income, succeeds admirably in distracting herself from thoughts of the handsome young bachelor Edward Ferrars (Hugh Grant), whom she met in her last days in Susse
Marianne, who finds rural society du
spends most of her time in meditati
rambles through the gorgeous countr
side, as if to nourish her spirit with ra
ture in preparation for the great, enn
bling experience of romantic love. An
when a suitable object of passion—
dashing and artistic gentleman name
Willoughby (Greg Wise)—rises up fro
the exquisite landscape, Marianne grat
fully allows herself to be swept away.

Small delights: Kate Winslet, Gemma Jones, Emilie Françoise, and Emma Thompson.

Anyone who has even a passing fami
iarity with Jane Austen will recognize in
mediately that Marianne's youthful hop
are too extravagant not to be disappointe
Austen's guiding principle—moral an
aesthetic—is the modest, constant value
everyday pleasures. She places her faith n
in the exhilaration of romantic tumult b
in the deep contentment of reasonable e
pectations reasonably satisfied. Althoug
Elinor's relationship with Edward is f
from smooth, and even looks, for a goo
while, to be absolutely hopeless, the elde
and wisest Miss Dashwood prevails ove
every adversity simply by refusing to be
lieve that her happiness depends entirel
on the fulfillment of this love. (Shy

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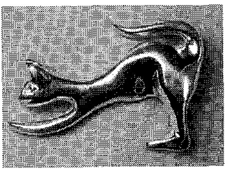

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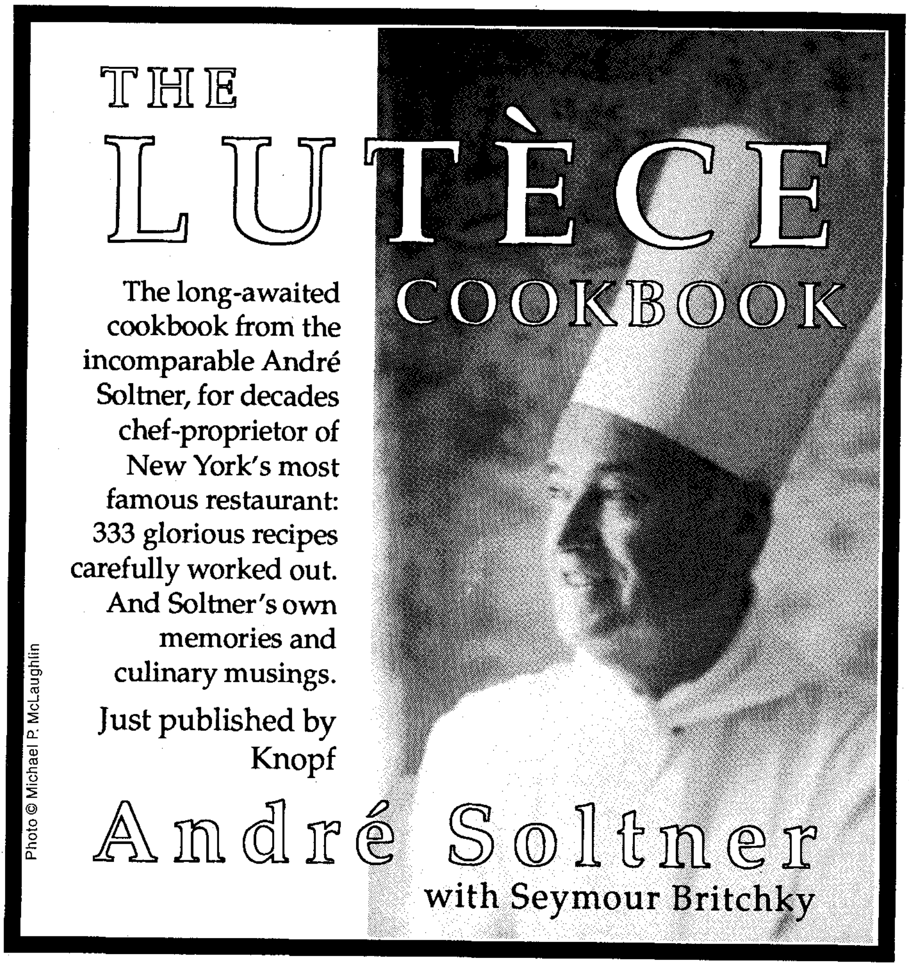
umble Edward is, in any event, not the
ind of suitor whose attentions might in-
ire ecstasy or whose loss might inspire
bject despair.) Elinor keeps busy, and
ever inflicts her private suffering on the
eople around her. The story is designed
illustrate the virtue of "exerting" one-
lf—of constantly struggling to subordi-
ate one's selfish needs to a sense of one's
uty to other people. Even when Elinor's
rospects appear bleak, she continues to
eet her amazingly numerous social ob-
gations, concealing her sorrows stoically
she trudges from card parties to dances
d from rural outings to gossipy teas.
Ier behavior is both a reproach and,
nally, an example to Marianne; and,
hen the younger sister at last learns to
nderstand and to emulate the elder, both
e granted their (sensible) rewards.

The movie is, in most respects, an
leal rendering of Austen's down-to-
arth manner. It is handsome but not
in, witty but not cruel: a gracious and
nfailingly pleasant entertainment, which
ioviegoers—who are conditioned to low
xpectations—will probably embrace with
holehearted, we-did-not-dare-to-hope
lief. Lee, a Taiwan-born director who
best known for the deft, sweet-natured
mily comedies "The Wedding Banquet"
1993) and "Eat Drink Man Woman"
994), has a straightforward and unpre-
ntious style that suits the material well.
nd he's a skillful director of actors.
hompson's performance here is, like
linor herself, solid, steady, and appeal-
ig; the actress neither condescends to the
iaracter's plainspoken decency nor exag-
rates her nobility. Thompson has to
irry the movie, and she bears the re-
onsibility without making a great fuss
out it. And she's wonderfully alert to
r fellow-actors: this is, appropriately, a
nsiderate performance.

It's fortunate that Thompson is so re-
rained. If she drew more attention to
erself, the viewer might become aware
the story's basic flaw, which is that
linor is several degrees too good to be
ue. Austen had not yet learned how to
lify her audience without idealizing her
eroines; the novel's Elinor is almost in-
ufferably virtuous, and too explicitly
erves as the standard-bearer for the au-
ior's opposition to the then current Ro-
iantic movement. Thanks to Thomp-
on's exertions—both as actress and as
creenwriter—the heroine's goodness
iever seems implausible, and Austen's



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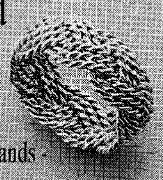

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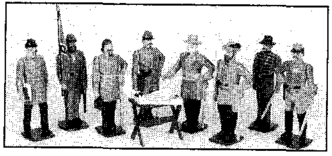

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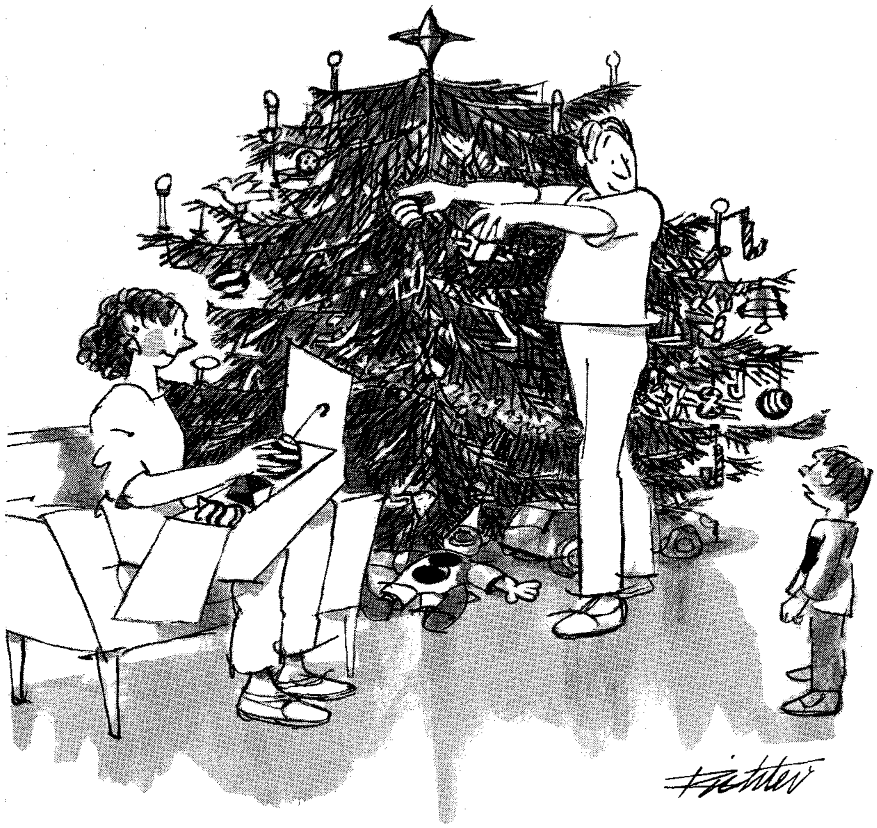
quiet but insistent polemical fervor is never permitted to overtax the story's delicate comic structure. This "Sense and Sensibility" plays as a slight, airy tale of love and marriage: if it pressed its temperate charms on us any harder, they would be much easier to resist.

Slowly and surely, the movie persuades us to settle for the small delights of engaging storytelling, warm humor, pretty scenery, and pretty people. Kate Winslet, blond and ringleted, makes a ravishing Marianne: the character's poetic transports are funny and touching, and throughout them the actress manages to suggest the fundamental sanity that will, in the end, save Marianne from being wholly undone by Romanticism. There's a different sort of pleasure in watching Alan Rickman as Colonel Brandon, a family friend who for most of the film is painfully, unrequitedly in love with Marianne. Brandon has a fine military bearing and a tender heart, but he's too old and far too even-tempered to attract the notice of the high-spirited girl, and his timing tends to be unfortunate: he often enters a room when Marianne is expecting her beloved Willoughby, and is greeted by a crushing look of unconcealed disappointment. Rickman, accepting the challenge of holding our interest in the unhappiness of a reserved middle-aged man, draws us into Brandon's politely ardent spirit: his soft, deep voice and his yearning eyes keep telling us that there's more to him than Marianne can see. Although many English actors have taken a crack at portraying repression, Rickman may be the only one since Trevor Howard in "Brief Encounter" who has made it magnetic.

To get full value from "Sense and Sensibility," however, you would be wise to indulge in a bit of romantic fancy and imagine someone other than Hugh Grant as Edward. Grant's performance is pure shtick. His embarrassed, stoop-shouldered routine is, in fact, uncomfortably reminiscent of his apologetic "Tonight Show" appearance last summer, and you can't help wondering what he's ashamed of now: he *should* be ashamed of trotting out the same bits of business for virtually every role he undertakes. He stands out from this otherwise smoothly coördinated ensemble like a guest dropping his trousers at a dinner party. In a way, his presence in "Sense and Sensibility" is the ultimate test case for the principles that the movie espouses: the proper response to such an affront is to resign oneself to the impossibility of perfect joy, even in sm things, and to turn away discreetly. Mo of us, however, will be forced to adm that this sort of forbearance has its limi

Of all Shakespeare's tragedies, non needs a new movie adaptation le than "Othello." The play has already be filmed twice, and both versions are, in ve different ways, glorious. Orson Welle 1952 film, with Welles as the Moor an Micheal MacLiammoir as the schemin ensign Iago, compresses the play into speedy ninety-two minutes without d priving it of its richness and amplitud the charged black-and-white imagery fi the gaps in the text with visual firewor that nearly match the effect of the pla volatile, melancholy poetry. The 196 version, in which Laurence Olivier pla the title role, records a performance of almost uncut "Othello," and, with a runni time of close to three hours, is lumbering, i elegant, and emotionally overwhelmin The journeyman director, Stuart Burg simply turns on the camera and watch in awe as Olivier, strutting and bellowin commands the screen with a flamboyan audacious portrayal of the comic and trag indignities of reckless passion: his perfo mance is one of the greatest displays of actor's imagination in the history of movi

The latest "Othello," directed by Ol ver Parker, has the distinction of bei the first movie of the play in which t black protagonist is played by a black a tor. This picture gives us Laurence Fis burne as Othello, and, according to t director, the motive for the new versi is to correct what he sees as an insufficie emphasis on the hero in previous produ tions. Parker has been quoted as sayin "For me, at the center of the play is t all-consuming love between Othello an Desdemona, which flies in the face of t conventions of the time. I wanted to r invest the tragedy with passion and r mance, because without romance there no real tragedy." If you ignore the inan of that last sentence (let's hope Park never turns his hand to "King Lear"), an if you ignore, too, the inconvenient fa that Othello dominates both previo movie versions of the play, the directo statement sounds reasonable enoug But, like Othello, film audiences tend t require "the ocular proof" to support eve the most persuasive assertions, and wh Parker puts on the screen is an "Othell that is thoroughly, helplessly Iagocentri



"Santa Claus is no longer part of my belief system."

• •

That's partly because Kenneth Branagh, ho plays the malevolent ensign, has a rer grasp of Shakespearean technique an anyone else in the cast. (Desdeona, for instance, is played by the Swiss tress Irene Jacob.) His performance is bold, confident piece of acting: in this ortrayal, Iago is a hearty, bluff, soldierly pe, whose artless manner enables him to in the trust of those he means to deroy. It's a welcome twist on the customy interpretation of the character—in any productions, Iago is so glib and oily at you can't imagine anyone's believg a word he says—and for long stretches the picture Branagh's fierce glee is all at the audience has to guide it through e muddle that Parker has made of the lay. Although this "Othello" is half an our longer than Welles's, it feels more rutally truncated, because Parker doesn't erely cut scenes but also slashes whole liloquies to ribbons, reducing this stiring dramatic poem to a tattered collecon of one-liners. His screenplay follows he familiar-quotations principle of hakespearean adaptation, carefully reaining all the Bard's big hits: "green-eyed nonster," "loved not wisely but too well," and "who steals my purse steals trash," among other timeless favorites. What Parker sacrifices is the volcanic flow of language that conveys the hero's pride, confusion, and anguish, and without it Othello is nothing.

It's difficult to tell whether Fishburne's soft-voiced, tentative, and mysteriously uncharismatic performance is the result of his own discomfort with the material (he has never played Shakespeare before) or whether the adaptation and the direction would defeat any actor's effort to make sense of the character. Whatever the cause, Fishburne looks lost, and Branagh walks off with the movie. Who steals this picture steals trash, though. What, finally, can you say about an "Othello" that clears out so much incandescent poetry and yet finds room for an extended bout of lovemaking between the hero and his wife? The sequence, shot and edited in a dreamy rock-video style, seems intended to provide visual accompaniment to some gooey pop ballad that we never hear. (Imagine something called "Beast with Two Backs," sung by Madonna.) Lacking a strong hero, the movie just drifts aimlessly from scene to scene; it's "Othello" unmoored. ♦

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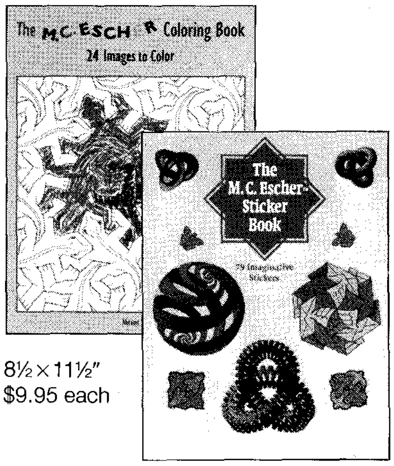

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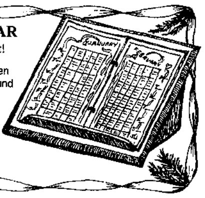

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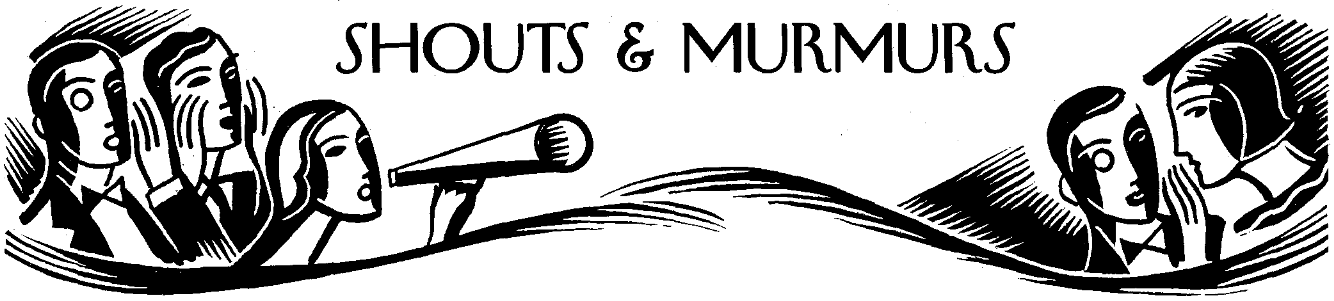


NO THANKS

BY DAVID OWEN

On Christmas Eve four years ago, my daughter, who was seven, suddenly sat up in bed and gasped, "Oh, no! Thank-you notes!"

I sympathized. When I was little, my anticipation of Christmas began around the middle of February and consisted of equal parts mounting excitement and creeping dread. I began composing next Christmas's wish list before this winter's snow was off the ground, but my yearning was tempered by the certainty that I would have to pay—and pay big. Christmas morning seemed to end before it began, but thank-you notes stretched way into January.

My antipathy to enforced gratefulness is the result, or perhaps the cause, of my mother's belief that gift-giving is partly a test of the recipient's manners. Every present under our Christmas tree was just the visible tip of an iceberg of obligation. My mother tracked each package as meticulously as a U.P.S. driver, and her master list haunted my siblings and me for the rest of winter vacation. Bells would be ringing, snow would be falling, our friends would be sliding down our street on brand-new Flexible Flyers—and my sister, my brother, and I would be bent over tear-spattered sheets of stationery, whimpering.

When my wife and I began our married life, my natural queasiness about matrimony was deepened by our swelling debt of gratitude. Every day, the mail brought another wok or toaster oven that had to be effusively acknowledged and then exchanged for something else. How much more joyous those first weeks of togetherness would have been if every gift had been accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed postcard preprinted with the message "Gift received in good condition—many thanks!" and by a sales receipt. Instead, with every day that passed I had a growing sense that all across the country throats were being cleared. Our supposed benefactors—like doormen extending gloved palms—were impatiently awaiting their due.

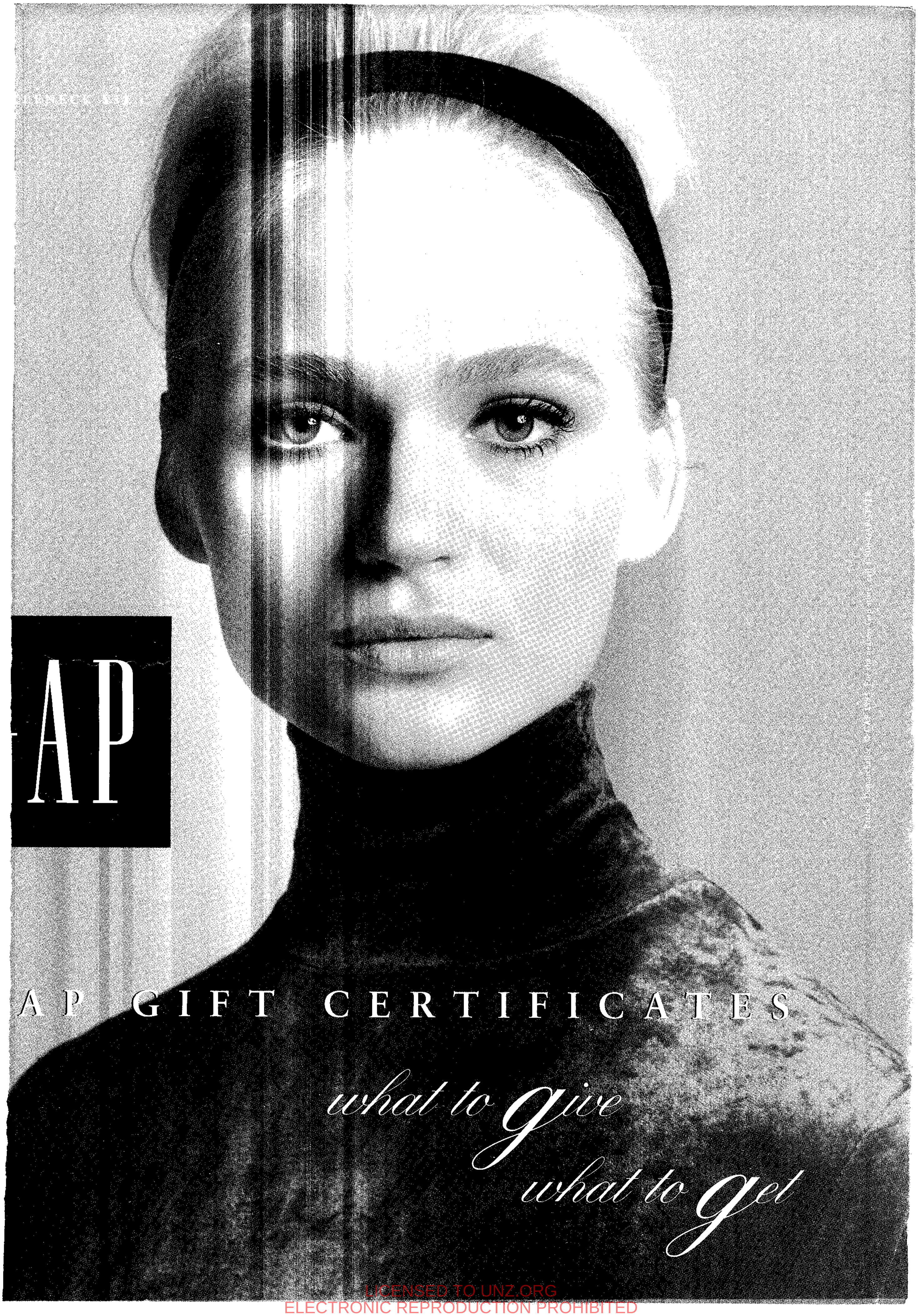
A few years ago, my wife's brother married a citizen of what was then the Soviet Union. After a straightforward ceremony at the Moscow Palace of Weddings, they moved to New York. Living in the United States involved many adjustments for my new sister-in-law. Some of them—for example, getting used to her new ability to walk into a Food Emporium at nine o'clock at night and buy a pint of Häagen-Dazs coffee ice cream—were easy. Others were not. One of the hardest was thank-you notes. "Russians don't write them," she told me, with exasperation. At first, she had thought her American mother-in-law was joking. Then, suddenly, the dark side of democracy sank in.

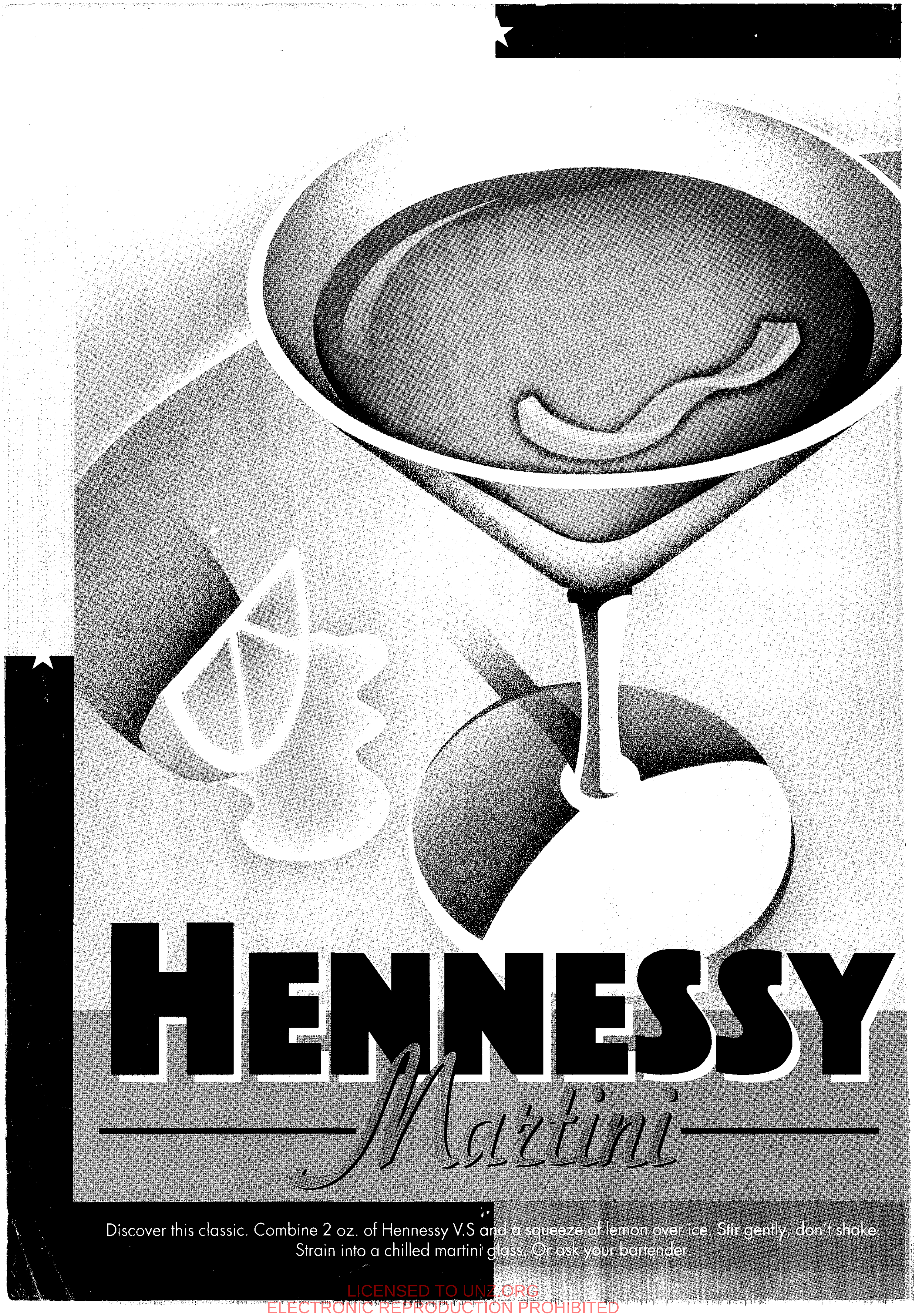
To that extent, my children would rather be Russians. A couple of years ago, I tried to ease their burden by teaching them to write thank-you notes the way Daddy does: on a computer, with lots of boilerplate text that can be cut and pasted. They caught on immediately, and ma refinements of their own, such as the di covery that the liberal use of clip art c make a short letter seem long witho arousing the suspicions of a pre-digi grandmother. Still, the minimal effort i volved in composing even a single all-pu pose paragraph seems excessive to the Why not abandon the exercise entirel

This year, in anticipation of the ho days, I have been working on anoth idea. With the help of an off-the-she computer program, I have created a ne legal document, called a Power Beneficiary. I am going to send one to e ery person who normally gives me pr sents, and it will permanently relieve n of the obligation to thank them. In effe it will authorize my relatives and frien to be grateful to themselves, in my stea for their kindness to me. Similarly, I pl to extend to others the right not to tha me for anything I might give them—pe haps through another legal document, Irrevocable Waiver of Gratitude.

Despite the foregoing, I am not o posed to all forms of overt appreciatio There are even times when I myself e joy being thanked, as in "Thank you f setting me straight on that," or "Than for pointing out the logical flaws in my a tempted refutation of your ideas." T key, I guess, is unexpectedness: the gra tude of others is most pleasing when does not seem to be a mere side effe of a brutally disciplined upbringin The only way to cultivate this sense spontaneity—fortunately—is to be stin with one's gratefulness. If every kin ness is promptly acknowledged, the in pact is lost.

These are radical ideas, I realize. B they are sensible, and they are overdu For your time and consideration, I than you in advance. ♦


AP
AP GIFT CERTIFICATES
what to give
what to get


HENNESSY
Martini

Discover this classic. Combine 2 oz. of Hennessy V.S and a squeeze of lemon over ice. Stir gently, don't shake. Strain into a chilled martini glass. Or ask your bartender.